





# TLS

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Cover picture

A. R. Penck's "Eau de Cologne" (1975) is reproduced from *The Museum of Modern Art: The history and the collection* (1979), pp. 1, 070. Illustrations, 319 in colour. Thames and Hudson, £40.00, 25403 5.

## Picture the scene

### Stephen Wall

MARTIN MEISEL  
Realizations: Narrative, pictorial, and theatrical art in nineteenth-century England 472pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press. £41.50.  
069106555

As a critical term, "theatrical" still sounds pejorative even - paradoxically enough - when applied to actual performance. Ruskin's remark that we shouldn't lose sight of Dickens's value and truth although he chose to speak "in a circle of stage fire" is, in view of Martin Meisel's subject, an appropriate example of an attitude that takes any tincture of the theatre in art as compromising, if not contaminating. Ruskin's readers would have made the connection with their own stage very promptly, since circles of chemical flares were one of the main sources of the crude glare which illuminated the popular theatre of his and Dickens's time. When Dickens himself said farewell to his audience at his last public reading he spoke of vanishing for evermore "from these garish lights". But then, a tone of defensiveness and apology has been one of the natural ways of responding to that hatred of the histrionic which - as Jonas Barish has shown in *The Anti-theatrical Prejudice* (1981) - has always accompanied the practice of the drama. Meisel's decision, therefore, to investigate the theatre as "a meeting place" for fiction, painting and drama shows a certain defiance. What supports and justifies his boldness is a powerfully substantiating scholarship deployed over a remarkably wide range.

*Realizations* is an unusually lavish and successful example of what might be called Sister Arts Studies. Such enterprises are especially demanding not only for the obvious reason that they require comparable degrees of command in the history of more than one art, but also because they depend on a tactful adjustment between large assertions and local particulars. The dangers of vapid zeitgeistmongering are less threatening when the subject is self-evidently valid and the field strictly delimited, as is a book like Hugh Willemeyer's admirable *George Eliot and the Visual Arts* (1979). But, by their nature, the more grandiose projects inevitably lure the critic towards excitable levels of generalization where the inconvenient individuality of given works is easily lost sight of. The better the work, of course, the more inadequate any account of it which treats it as merely the symptom of a tendency. On the other hand, art does not emerge - certainly, nineteenth-century art did not emerge - from an idea-free environment protected from cross-infection caused by aesthetic theory. Shaw's opinion that Dickens was "a complete Philistine" with as little awareness of contemporary art as was possible "to a man so apprehensive" may have some justification as a piece of rhetorical emphasis, but - as Professor Meisel shows - it is simply wrong in terms of demonstrable fact. Indeed, part of the present value of *Sister Arts Studies*, properly pursued, lies in their resistance to the demeaning puritanism of assuming that texts only relate to other texts.

The weakness of nineteenth-century drama as text has further encouraged the notion that the theatrical - particularly the spectacularly theatrical - is automatically the indefensible. The inability of Browning, the great master of the dramatic monologue, to write speakable dialogue is typical of the general failure of the poets of the period to come to successful terms with the stage. (One of Meisel's many intriguing footnotes tells us that D. W. Griffith, the pioneer of cinema, made two versions of *Pippa Passes*: because of the allent film certainly seems a shrewd move, in the circumstances.) Moreover, the legacy of the 'Victorian' poets' Romantic predecessors was, theatrically speaking, conspicuously consumed in a manner which patently devalued the word in favour of the picture. Byron's practical involvement with the management of Drury Lane left him deeply unenthusiastic about the actual performance of his 'dramas', but his haughtiness did not prevent later exploitations of the invitations to spectacle which his plays offered. The conjunction here - to use one of Meisel's key terms - was between Byron and the apocalyptic

painter John Martin. Martin's enormous canvases, Meisel argues, show Byron's influence. So when Macready presented Byron's *Sardanapalus* in 1834 it was natural enough to model its sensational last scene on the colossal vistas of Martin's "The Fall of Nineveh" (the scene painter was Dickens's friend Clarkson Stanfield; the smoke seems to have got rather out of hand on the first night). By the time of Charles Kean's production of the same play in 1853, Layard had published the results of his excavations at Nineveh, and the actor-manager drilled his cast in appropriately Assyrian attitudes as established by the latest research. Kean's own acting was so remarkable for its attention to "little traits and details" that E. S. Dallas called it Pre-Raphaelite. Even so, the scale and perspectives of Martin's vision remained as a governing visual principle, as they also did in various nineteenth-century versions of *Manfred*.

The claims of text were even more ruthlessly subordinated by Irving in his celebrated *Foetus*, first staged in 1885. Goethe's lines were not only feebly translated but also savagely cut so

the actors and stage-artists had briefly recreated in three-dimensional form. Wilkie's scenes were widely known, partly through exhibition but principally through engraving. Realization, as Meisel explains, is essentially a mode of allusion, and the allusion must be spotted if the effect is to be made. The new facility of reproduction made possible by nineteenth-century printing technology ensured an unprecedented access to works of art, especially those with popular appeal and the vernacular character at which Wilkie aimed. This currency made the theatrical embodiment of such images feasible: the audience would get the point because they knew the print.

The number of pictures famous in their day which were incorporated into performance indicates that the practice of realization was something more than a passing theatrical fashion. Planché had anticipated Jerrold by realizing Eastlake's pictures of Italian brigands; Philip Calderon's popular "Broken Vows" was introduced into an 1866 comedy; Sarah Setchell's prison painting "The Memento Question" and Abraham Solomon's



Charles Court's engraving of Sir Joshua Reynolds's painting "Garriok Between Tragedy and Comedy", reproduced from the book reviewed here.

as to allow Irving himself to create stage pictures of unprecedented subtlety and grandeur. He was clearly a lighting designer of genius, and his reduction of the hitherto bright house lights was a necessary step towards creating the refined pictorial effects for which the Lyceum was renowned. The Broken scene put the *Illustrated London News* in mind of both Doré and Martin; other reviewers were reminded of Rembrandt, Dürer, and even Whistler. (A full account of the production - which involved over 350 people not including the orchestra - can be found in Michael R. Booth's *Victorian Spectacular Theatre*, 1981, which no doubt appeared too late for Meisel to refer to; Booth's more specialized details corroborate and at times amplify Meisel's.) For Irving, everything on stage was there to produce the most artistic scenic effect; the actor had always to remember that "he is a figure in a picture", even when as in Irving's case he was the central figure.

Irving's Lyceum style was a late development in a process that had begun more than half a century earlier, and tracing its varieties, complications, and byways provides some of Meisel's most absorbing themes. One of the theatrical events of 1832 was a melodrama by Douglas Jerrold in which David Wilkie's two famous pictures, "The Rent Day" and "The Distressing for Rent", were realized as tableaux at the beginning and end of the first Act. Meisel quotes a reviewer's comment (haltingly) that "the arrangement of the various persons, as the drop fell, was so striking that the audience testified their approbation by three rounds of applause". Wilkie himself was profoundly touched, as a letter to the scene painter (Stanfield again) shows. The effect depended on the audience's recognition of the pictures which

working principle. After all, the artist himself had said, "My Picture was my Stage". J. T. Haines's 1839 piece *The Life of a Woman or, The Curate's Daughter*, which presented a "living embodiment" of *The Harlot's Progress*, was only one of several to exploit the sequential possibilities of Hogarth's series.

The two temperance series by Hogarth's nineteenth-century successor Cruikshank were also speedily theatricalized. *The Bottle* (1847) featured realizations of all the sequence's eight plates, and made a point of advertising the artist's own "Personal Superintendence" of the tableaux. A similar legitimacy was claimed for the official production of the sequel *The Drunkard's Children* in the following year. (Both series are reproduced in Meisel's book, and the very full illustrations throughout make it easy to follow his arguments; engravings are widely used, so that we see the pictures in the form most familiar in the period.) The writers of the play-texts in these cases had to try and preserve the violent but of course stationary force of Cruikshank's images - what Baudelaire called "a kind of explosion, so to speak, within the expression" - while being obliged to open them out so as to fill in the necessary stage-time. Meisel is no doubt right to doubt whether any stage version equalled the powerful effect of the last plate of *The Drunkard's Children* in which the gin-mad daughter - having leapt off the bridge - is seen from below in mid-flight, hair streaming, hand over eyes, bonnet in mid-air above her, with the moon behind seen through the looming arch of the bridge. The river is not shown: it is almost as if the girl is jumping into the spectator's lap. Nevertheless, some actresses were game enough to try to realize the effect, including the unfortunate Mrs R. Honner who, in an analogous leap in *The Boiteux of Paris* at the Surrey Theatre, "missed the mattress that should have broken her fall" and was badly hurt. As Meisel points out, Cruikshank's picture contains a particular mixture of elements which exerted a powerful appeal in the period: the bridge, the night, the river, and the unfortunate woman "wanting to end it all", form a combination variously deployed by artists such as Watts, Egg and Fildes, by Dickens and George Eliot, as well as by theatrical managers. It is, one might add, a sign of Little Dorrit's innocence and spirituality that she can spend a night on the Iron Bridge and yet remain untouched by the usual implications of such iconography.

Another artist who wished to escape the fixity of a painting's frozen moment was Holman Hunt, but although some of his best-known subjects were drawn from Shakespeare, his underlying tendency - as Meisel interestingly demonstrates - was novelistic. In Hunt's 1851 canvas based on *Two Gentlemen of Verona* showing Valentine rescuing Sylvia from Proteus, the significant figure is the displaced Julia on the painting's far left. Ruskin commented on the "contending of doubt and distress with awakening hope" revealed by her expression. It is her inner turmoil and dawning awareness of a new situation that gives the picture its narrative momentum. As Meisel says, "she is the only figure aware of all the others" (though she is not actually looking at any one of them), and his suggestion that she thus becomes a proto-Jamesian reverberator is attractive. The alterations Hunt made to this picture in the process of composition show a marked increase in psychological subtlety, and his repainting of his *Measure for Measure* study throws a comparable stress on the inner reaction of Isabella to Claudio's fears of death. Similarly, the first version of "The Awakening Conscience" showed the lost girl getting off her lover's knee with what Ruskin called an expression of "sudden horror"; the face was repainted (the picture's owner found it too painful to live with) so as to emphasize not only revulsion for her seducer and his sinful piano but also a nascent hope of salvation. The picture's companion piece was, in fact, "The Light of the World", which again offers the possibility of conversion, more emblematically. Hunt was thus seeking to supply a narrative dimension through the suggestion of an inner transformation, so that the fixed pictorial moment seems part of a moral process. In this he differed radically from more conventional kinds of Victorian painting which offered a situation



immobilized for effect, much as, in the theatre, the forming of a pictorial tableau was accompanied by a significant pause. In Millais's essays in narrative painting, such as "A Huguenot", "The Order of Release", and "The Black Brunswicker", the presented moment is one of suspension amid the opposing historical forces governing the scene (the St Bartholomew Massacre, the Jacobite rebellion, and Waterloo respectively). It represents, Meisel argues, a kind of equilibrium characteristic of the effects in the nineteenth-century well-made play, with its typical leaning towards "strong" situations of impasse.

Millais became Trollope's favoured illustrator but both he and Hunt were admirers of Thackeray, particularly as the delineator of the hidden impulse. The interplay between story and picture as it shows itself in Victorian fiction is exemplified in *Realizations* by two important chapters on Thackeray and Dickens. As Thackeray was his own illustrator, one might expect in him an organic interrelation between image and text. As a writer, Thackeray often seems to be simultaneously pulled in opposite directions, and the cover of *Pendennis* shows the eponymous hero (who has close connections with the author) hesitating between a supplicating conjugal figure supported by two domestically appealing poppets, and a siren whose arch expression is offset by her bare bosom (rather nervously drawn), fishy tail and accompanying fawns. According to Meisel, the design alludes both to Reynolds's picture "Garrick Between Tragedy and Comedy" and beyond that to the long-familiar motif of The Choice of Hercules (done by Maclise as recently as 1831). The suspension between Pleasure and Duty, Virtue and Vice, sentiment and satire, was both the source of Thackeray's strongest effects and an indication of his endemic unease. It is seen in that ambivalence towards his created world that at its best is so creative, but which in its later stages (not discussed here) becomes so enfeebled. It is seen most notably in those mixed feelings about Becky Sharp which have been discussed often enough, but to which Meisel adds a novel gloss. Like Garrick, and for that matter like Thackeray himself, Becky is a performer. Her natural bent seems to be for comedy, but her circumstances sometimes require her to go in for sterner stuff. Her performance in a *tableau vivant* as the murderous Clytemnestra — in which she realizes a painting by Pierre-Narcisse Guérin — is a chilling indication of her private capacity. (The use of the *tableau vivant* is the cue for Meisel to connect Thackeray's use of this pictorial-cum-theatrical device, with Goethe's *Elective Affinities*, in which it also figures.) Chapter 67 of *Vanity Fair* features "Becky's second appearance in the character of Clytemnestra", and includes an illustration showing Becky skulking, knife in hand, behind a curtain with the doomed and unaware Jos Sedley on the other side of it. This seems to imply, a more positive opinion as to Becky's guilt than the prose narrative is prepared to commit itself to, and the result in Meisel's view is unsatisfactory. The indictment of the picture offers a cruder form of knowledge than the more tentative hesitations of the narrative, which can better sustain Thackeray's ironic scepticism about how much can ever be known about what people are capable of. Meisel's unwillingness to let Thackeray off the hook at this point is the more welcome because he is generally so much more expository than critical. Although his style can be both terse and lively, there is such a wealth of exegesis that it is hard not to hanker now and then for a touch of the sort of brisk going-over that Peter Conrad gives to narrative painting in *The Victorian Treasure-House* (1973).

Thackeray's chronic discomfort was partly the result of an extreme fastidiousness embarrassed by the need to make an effect which his status as a performer required of him. He had a devastating eye for the specious appeal in other writers — hence his brilliance as a parodist — and his most impressive passages are those where he calculated and signalled evasion of effect leads to a persuasive kind of truth, as in his treatment of the Battle of Waterloo, in which the story refuses to realize the expected heroic picture. There is nothing apologetic about Dickens's use of the theatrical, and indeed there hardly could be, since the histrionic and the stagey (if



J. Saunders's engraving of "Roman Charity" by Andrea Sirani (1630-42), reproduced from the book reviewed here.

one may use the word neutrally) were organic parts of his genius. But although he was by all accounts an actor of mesmeric power and versatility, his practical work in the theatre was that of an amateur; he was a novelist by profession. As Meisel reminds us, Dickens's thinking about the theatrical, like his use of it, was more sophisticated than is sometimes supposed. His enormous relish for thespian rubbish — from Crummles to Wopsle — is the obverse and corollary of his commitment to the principle that, as he said in a speech to the Royal General Theatrical Fund honouring Thackeray, "every writer of fiction . . . writes in effect for the stage". No one could be less embarrassed about the interrelation than Dickens.

Even so, there are essential areas of Dickens's meaning which are indicated by indirection and allusion. In one of his book's most fascinating chapters, Meisel shows how much lies behind the apparently simple picture of Little Dorrit comforting her father in the Marshalsea. As *Little Dorrit* was taking shape, Dickens's friend Augustus Egg exhibited a picture showing a man behind bars being

embraced and consoled by a woman, glossed in the catalogue by the quotation of Moore's line "Come, rest in this bosom, my own stricken deer". From *Fidelia* on, the scene of female and familial compassion ministering to an imprisoned husband or father was one of wide currency and deeply felt significance. In fact, the depiction of spiritual hope and domestic love uplifting the erring in their worst hour has many more analogues than Meisel has space to list: Pip holding the condemned Magwitch's hand, Dinah Morris comforting the guilty Hetty in *Adam Bede*, represent two further mutations of the theme.

The introduction of the cells of Marshalsea and the Marshalsea would not have surprised the early readers of *Little Dorrit*, although they might have expected (and they finally got) prison scenes as the climax rather than as the ground-work of the novel. Dickens tells them that the collections of the Marshalsea "little reeked . . . what a serious picture they had in their obscure gallery". What was the picture? It was the subject known as "Roman Charity", which portrayed a classical daughter who, as Dickens decorously puts it, "ministered to her father in his prison as her mother had ministered to her". Dickens knew Murphy's drama on the story *The Grecian Daughter* (1772), and had been struck by a version of this much-painted theme he had come across in Genoa in which the daughter "fondly throws her arm about her old father whose life she is preserving". The picture in question is given a full-page reproduction and seems what might now be politely called an interesting period piece. Certainly, the idea of a daughter suckling her father is likely to make a modern audience queasy, and is in any case hardly appropriate to Little Dorrit herself, whose physical immaturity is often stressed. The principal bosom in the novel, after all, belongs to the syndecochic Mrs Merdle, who had entered it "into competition with the snows of North America, and had come off at little disadvantage in point of whiteness, and at none in point of coldness". It is true that through a typically Dickensian logic Little Dorrit is regarded by Maggy, a retarded adult, as a little mother, but of course in Dickens childhood is not a matter of age. It is true,

that, when out at night with Maggy, she was the child of the two by a woman obliged about to take in a Cruikshankian leap of Dickens's point. Mr Dorrit, for all his gentleness, belongs to what Meisel calls "the monstrous class of the devious parent"; as elsewhere Dickens, the child is obliged to become like the mother — or in this story the daughter — selfishness and egotism. It is the daughter's heroic self-sacrifice which redeems the situation, the physical sustenance in Little Dorrit case being delicately sublimated to that "angelic purity" and "filial reverence" Dickens admired in the Genoese painting. After Dorrit's death, as Meisel reminds us, Little Dorrit continues to exercise her charity — Clennam — old enough to be her father — incarcerated in his turn: "drawing an arm round his neck, [she] laid his head upon his bosom, [and] nursed him as lovingly, as GOD knows as innocently, as she had nursed her father in that room when she had been a baby".

The motif of Roman Charity in *Little Dorrit* is not the whole story — strictly, no doubt, as *Little Dorrit* itself is the whole story — but fuller explication would need to consider other factors as Dickens's father's imprisonment, his mother's "being warm" for him, and his mother's application of it to the novel, an excellent example of how his wide-ranging researches (which are even more extensive than I have been able to indicate here) illuminate the imaginative language of the period. On occasion he goes beyond it, though some of his lunges towards such modern and postmodern topics as the John Wayne film *Sands of Iwo Jima* or the non-representational art of Rothlisberg are touched on almost too perfunctorily. Meisel's achievement — and it is a major one — is both to draw on and extend the long richness of scholarly work on nineteenth-century narrative and pictorial style so as to provide a new understanding of how — at certain times and in specific ways — the artist truly stirs.

## A well-swept chimney

Rosemary Dinnage

MAX ROSENBAUM and MELVIN MUROFF  
(Editors)  
Anna O.: Fourteen contemporary  
reinterpretations  
187pp. Collier/Macmillan. £20.50.  
0029269407

The Anna O. story has been called the first psychoanalytic case history. It unfolded itself between 1880 and 1882, and, at Freud's urging, was written up by Josef Breuer in 1895 for Freud and Breuer's *Studies in Hysteria* — Freud's first book. It has become celebrated partly because of the luxuriance of the hysterical symptoms in the case, partly because of the circumstances of Breuer's precipitate ending of it and partly because "Anna O." has since been identified and followed up as Bertha Pappenheim, a pioneer feminist and social worker.

Anna O. was twenty-one when she fell ill, a sensitive, clever and strong-willed girl. She had, as so often seems to have happened in hysteria cases, been nursing her sick father, to whom she was devoted. The symptoms that gradually took over were a cough, an inability to see and hear fully, paralyses and contractures in the arms and legs, inability to drink, unwillingness to talk German (she spoke in English, French and Italian instead) and finally a split-personality condition in which for part of each day she was in what Breuer calls her *condition seconde*. In her basic state she was sad and anxious but rational; in the *condition seconde* she was aggressive, saw hallucinations and complained of being driven crazy. She said that she had two egos, a real and an evil one. After some months her father died, and all these symptoms worsened.

Breuer visited her once or twice daily, and fed her by hand. During her "absent" states she would experience terrifying hallucinations; in the evenings, when she was in a hypnotic state, he would come and "take them away" by getting her to relate them — leaving her calmed, until the next bunch of hallucinations were ready to be taken. This was what she referred to as the "talking-cure", or "chimney-sweeping". When Breuer had been away on holiday for some weeks he could only calm her by listening to all the hallucinations that had accumulated during his absence.

The most extraordinary development of her illness took place during the second year, in the winter of 1881-2. Every day, during the *condition seconde*, she relived the same day from the previous winter. Breuer's notes, and the mother's diary, confirmed that she was systematically back in the previous year during those hours. The talking-cure became more long-drawn-out each day than ever, as last year's fantasies had to be exorcized as well as the current year's. Bit by bit, however, she did talk away the paralyses and anaesthesias and disturbances of speech and hearing, by retracing their causes in exact reverse chronological order. The labour involved for Breuer can be gathered from the fact that for her hysterical hearing loss alone she recounted 303 separate causal scenes. And any attempt to shorten the procedure made the patient very angry.

The end of Anna O.'s treatment with Breuer is well known. Breuer having bade her farewell as "cured", he was summoned urgently to her house again. She was in pain; she was, she said, in labour, and the child was Dr Breuer's. He hypnotized her out of it, and left for good. Treating such a case is impossible, he is reported — not surprisingly — to have said. His account in *Studies in Hysteria* ends: "It took considerable time before her psycho-equilibrium was restored. She has since then enjoyed perfect health."

Certainly when she eventually became well, possibly not till her late twenties — no longer Anna O. but Bertha Pappenheim — she did enjoy perfect health and energy. She became a director of a Jewish orphanage, founded a home for single girls and their children, travelled on a commission of inquiry into the white slave trade, founded the League of Jewish Women, spoke at conferences and published books and translations. Through the First World War she worked steadily and died

War. After the war the West German government issued a Bertha Pappenheim stamp, honouring her as a pioneer social worker.

The case raises no end of questions. How could someone suffering such severe hysterical symptoms for so long turn to such a successful and productive life? We know of all too many cases — Freud's Emmy von N., for instance, and Alice James, sister of Henry and William — who remained crippled and helpless. No doubt it was finding constructive employment that worked the miracle, but how did she get herself off the sofa and into work? The most interesting part of the story, the bridge between the sick woman and the working one, is the part we know least of. Was Breuer's devoted daily visiting the right way to treat her (apart from the fact that, as he said, it became impossible for him)? When she hallucinated being pregnant by him — a hopeful and grateful symbol after the horrors that she usually produced — could he have made something of the symbol, rather than just hypnotizing her out of it? Were there further calls for help, which he ignored? — for clearly the innumerable fantasies that had to be chimney-swept away were designed to keep him at her side for as long as possible. Even if he had not been a pre-Freudian and had grasped the idea of the patient's "transference" (and it cannot have been unknown to doctors at the time that their patients became attached to them) is there any way he could have handled Anna O.'s transference when she was for much of the time in a hallucinated or a hypnotic state? Is it possible that her later successful life owed something to having received devoted care from Breuer — or did she look back on her treatment with horror?

As representative of the first psychoanalytic case, Anna O. is not really a good candidate. The symptoms were more bizarre than in any other of Freud's or Breuer's cases. The talking-cure was not much like free association, consisting as it did of the patient recounting hallucinations under hypnosis. A more suitable first psychoanalytic case might be that of Miss Elisabeth von R., which had good Freudian motives underlying it (guilt, love for a brother-in-law); had a successful outcome and was treated by a kind of free association (since the patient reported "triumphantly" that she could not be hypnotized, Freud told her she would see the answer to his question the moment he placed his hand on her brow; it was most successful).

Max Rosenbaum and Melvin Muroff's book is a collection of essays by American psychoanalysts, with a linking theme of "How would we treat Anna O. today?" Alas, they are verbose and forgettable. None ponders the implications of the fact that Anna O. was able to recall in precise sequence each day of the previous year, and repeat in reverse chronological order each of her traumas. None discusses the question of hysteria and its virtual disappearance from the repertoire of symptoms now, which remains such a mystery. And the idea of Anna O., with her florid *fin-de-siècle* symptomatology, on the couch of the American shrink in Chicago, Boston, or New York is a little ludicrous. Psychoanalysts have got used to very docile and well-functioning patients, and it is hard to see how these authors would actually deal with a paralysed, hallucinating, half-blind and deaf girl. The most straightforward piece is by a feminist author who says that today Anna O. wouldn't have needed treatment; she would have been fulfilled and happy. Perhaps; or perhaps she would have found one of the modern routes to unhappiness, expressed in modern symptomatology. What we really need is the secret of the transition from gross psychopathology to an honourable and fruitful life.

*Thibaut's Psychology: Eight Essays* edited by Raymond D. Gozall (187pp. University Press of America. £21.50) contains essays which were originally presented at a conference, *Psychology and the Literary Artist: A case study of David Henry Thoreau*, held at the State University of New York in 1978. Among the papers included here are Gozall's "Freudian view of Thoreau", Richard Lebeaux's analysis of pre-Walden and post-Walden Thoreau according to Eriksonian principles, and "Thoreau and Eros" by Walter Harding which discusses Thoreau's possible latent homosex-

## Mental manifestations

Brian Inglis

STAN GOOCH  
*Creatures from Inner Space*  
258pp. Rider. £8.95.  
091553709

For the past half-century mainstream parapsychologists have been trying to win the confidence of orthodox but sceptical scientists with the help of science's own methods: controlled laboratory trials, statistical validation of results and so on. The outcome has been disillusioning: the findings, positive though they have often been, have been either ignored or rejected on the score of some flaw in the protocol, leaving a loophole for deception on the part of the subjects tested or the investigators or both.

There have always been critics of this approach, and Stan Gooch is one of them. He evidently shares the view of Sir Oliver Lodge in 1933 — ironically, the year before the publication of J. B. Rhine's *Extra-Sensory Perception*, which initiated the laboratory era. Lodge warned that "nothing is likely to carry real conviction except the cumulative effect of first-hand experiences, of various kinds, under a great variety of circumstances". *Creatures from Inner Space* takes an up-to-date look at certain first-hand experiences, some of which conventional parapsychology has tended to shy away from, but which periodically surface — spontaneous combustion, for one, which, as Gooch points out, is exceptionally well-attested, because human bodies cannot burn "naturally" in the way that they burn spontaneously, so what remains is mute testimony to the existence of forces which science is unable to account for.

Less idiosyncratic than Gooch's earlier work, *The Paranormal*, *Creatures from Inner Space* is also more ambitious. A practising

psychologist who happens also to be a medium, Gooch makes a serious attempt to relate a range of psychic phenomena to a parallel and, he believes, interlocking range of what are ordinarily regarded as (and not infrequently treated as) psychoses, such as autism and multiple personality. His assumption is that spirits, apparitions, discarnate entities and such are the products of our imaginations — by which he does not mean that they are imaginary, in the stock sense. To the person who experiences it, a hallucination is every bit as real as the real thing.

It would have been better to start with something more familiar to readers than incubi and succubi, such as poltergeists — and incidentally, in his brief account of these, Gooch should not have omitted the report of the investigation of the Rosenheim poltergeist in the late 1960s, the most rigorously investigated case of all, which ended with the sceptical investigators ruefully admitting not merely that no human hand was responsible for what was happening, but that no human hand could have been responsible.

There are a number of such flaws, some serious. Given his theme, Gooch should have included the evidence for materializations by physical mediums, as it links up with his notions about the imagination's creative powers. Some are minor — for example, it is disconcerting to find, ten pages after he has been dealing with A. R. G. Owen's work on poltergeists, a reference to "the wife of a Professor Owen" which does not identify her as Mrs A. R. G. And surely it is odd for a psychologist to argue that the physical brain "in some sense produces the mind and consciousness" on the ground that omens can sometimes be cured by a chemical? But it is a thoughtful, and stimulating contribution; a reminder, too, to psychical researchers that it is time they paid more heed to Lodge's warning.

## Company accounts

Julie Hankey

GERALD EADES BENTLEY  
*The Profession of Player in Shakespeare's Time 1590-1642*  
316pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press.  
£23.20.  
0691065969

No one can hope to do for theatrical organization in the half-century from 1590 in England what, for example, John Russell has recently done for the opera industry of nineteenth-century Italy. The Elizabethan story (and on up to 1642) has been outlined often enough and what remains is to clarify the details. It is a major step to be able to correct loose assumptions about hired men (companies consisted of actor-sharers, hired men, and apprentices) being generally paid six shillings a week. By no means always so: Gerald Eades Bentley shows in seven pages of documentation that it was anything from five to ten shillings. It is not as much a question of new evidence (though in this instance, Bentley has gone directly to the Public Record Office for several illustrations) as of looking carefully at what is already known. For the court records, contracts, wills, account-book entries and so on which furnish the evidence and fill so many scholarly volumes — notably Bentley's own — are familiar reference territory.

For anything like a full-scale treatment of the actor's professional work (as distinct from his art) one has to go back to T. W. Baldwin's *The Organization and Personnel of the Shakespearean Company* (1927) — a marvellous book crammed with information, but which presses some of its conclusions, particularly on casting, too far. Bentley therefore has more to say in the light of modern research, but also, deliberately, much less. In fact, given the honesty of his scholarship, one occasionally wonders whether there is really enough material to

justify a whole book.

Certainly there are not enough separate pieces of evidence for Bentley to avoid sometimes using the same documents several times over in order to illustrate different points. Thus an entry in the diary of Thomas Crosfield, whose collage was visited by a troupe of players, is quoted at one point to explain the difference between hired men and sharers. Later on, under the section headed "Wardrobe keepers or tiremen" it comes up again so as to show that among these hired men were wardrobe keepers. Still later, under a section in the chapter on managers, it reappears to indicate that there were such people as leaders, or managers among the sharers. The problem is that in such a minutely sectional treatment this splitting up of scant information is inevitable. The effect, on a continuous reading, is disconcertingly like going through an efficiently cross-indexed box of filing cards.

For scholarly purposes that is hardly a problem, and yet the filing-card method can become a little dogged. For example, though you might expect to find somewhere a statement to the effect that sharers were responsible for recruiting and dismissing fellow sharers in the event of death or misbehaviour, Bentley, in spite of the fact that not much is known about it, has a separate subsection on the matter. An order from the Lord Chamberlain to the King's Men in 1633 to recruit more players is interesting and unexpected because it authorizes that company to head-hunt from the other London companies. But the most that can be made of the other two instances of departure and recruitment is that much protracted discussion must have gone on.

On the other hand, this halting, inch-by-inch method has its rewards. Things emerge for the first time — for example, what appear to have been training-schools for boy players — and little-known facts are documented such as the "danegeid" paid to visiting London players by

mayors of quiet country towns. (Sometimes the money was cheerfully accepted and it is slow put on just the same.) There are no emphases on already known facts. For example, I had vaguely assumed that the sharers were the principal actors of a company. The fact that Shakespeare, a sharer, was a minor actor, was lost sight of in the fact that he was a major playwright. But one William Shakespeare was also a sharer without being a notable one. Clearly sharer-capital was sometimes more important than the pious picture of the Elizabethan theatre being, at least in theory, under the control of the performers, is really modified.

Or if that picture had in any case been altered by what we know of the enterprising powers of theatre-owning financiers such as Henslowe and Christopher Beeston, then, on the other side, it is worth pausing over the non-controlling management function which some companies appear to have vested in one of their fellows. This important position has not been especially noticed, except where it was abused; but as Bentley points out, it was largely because of the efficiency and honesty of one of its holders, John Hemmings of the King's Men, that that company (Shakespeare's) remained so stable and successful.

A major virtue of *The Profession of Player in Shakespeare's Time* is that it keeps in sight the unmentioned members of the profession, the ruck of poorly paid hired men (Crosfield's "hirelings") who made up the bulk of theatre personnel. Bentley reminds us of the sheer size of the industry, compared with the small number of names that has come down to us, and of the fact that there were hundreds of provincial road companies that never came to London. Above all, he never allows the fact about the King's Men, the most famous and well-documented company, to be an indicator for the rest of this profession, as it is then as it is now.

### August Books

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## Outdoor outsiders

**Helen King**

**W. BLAKE TYRRELL**

*Amazons: A study in Athenian mythmaking* 166pp. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. \$14.50. 08018 31180

"Amazon: One of a fabulous race of female warriors" (*Concise Oxford*). While some contemporary feminists tracking down the lost women of her-story would like to take "fabulous" in the sense of "excellent" and embrace the Amazons as sisters from a historical patriarchy, W. Blake Tyrrell is surely well-advised to concentrate on "fabulous" as "unhistorical". He is by no means the first in recent years to avoid questions of whether the Amazons had any referent in reality and instead to regard the myths as "a historical product of Greek thought...fabricated from cultural data". Far from being a feminist utopia, at their origins at least they were a creation of Greek patriarchal values. Tyrrell therefore examines the self-image of the classical Greek polis, with particular

reference to ideas about sexuality, war and rites of passage, in order to isolate the raw material out of which Amazon myths were manufactured.

Tyrrell's methodology could be loosely described as "structuralist". The Amazon myths form a particularly interesting and demanding object for structuralist analysis, since some changes and details can be accurately dated and related to political uses of the myths by historical individuals and interest groups. The main intellectual debt acknowledged is to J.-P. Vernant's work, especially to the formula "Marriage is for the girl what war is for the boy": the Amazons' renunciation of marriage is structurally equivalent to their position as warriors.

Although Tyrrell explicitly sets himself in the Vernant tradition, it would be misleading to suggest that we have here a new analysis in the mould of the Paris school of structuralist classicists. In practice, the approach used owes more to Charles Segal. Tyrrell sees the "purpose" or "function" of myth as mediating conflicts and reducing anxiety; a key assumption is the "polar outlook of the Greeks". It must also

be said that his acquaintance with the Paris school is not as complete as it should be, since many of his most interesting points have already been made by other scholars associated with Vernant. Nicole Loraux has discussed Greek attitudes to women, as outsiders excluded from certain spheres of social life yet also essential to the reproduction of that same social group which rejects them; she has also written about autochthony and funeral orations, areas which play an important part in Tyrrell's argument. Pauline Schmitt's work on the girdle as signifier in female dress similarly pre-empted his comments on Heracles' quest for the girdle of the Amazon Hippolyte. The works of both these authors are, surprisingly, omitted from the bibliography.

The book has many unfortunate errors which should have been removed at the proof stage; spelling of deities (Aphrodite) and modern authorities (H.H. Schullard), inconsistent citation and incomplete references (as Vernant's essay "Hestia-Hermès" is a fundamental text here, it seems perverse not to give its location). The "cooling" plant used by women at the festival of the Thesmophoria (*vitex agnus castus*) becomes the "angus"; perhaps kept in the sporran of lascivious Scots? This simple typographical error occurs with a more serious fault of interpretation. Medical and ritual uses of the agnus were not restricted to cooling sexual desire, as it was also thought to stimulate menstruation and breast milk. By suppressing one of its aspects Tyrrell reduces its complexity to create an artificial "polarity". He links the Thesmophoria to "darkness" and "gloom", in contrast to "masculine festivals" set in well-lit houses or outdoors: women, darkness and enclosure opposed to men, light and openness. The Thesmophoria and the chaste agnus, like the Amazons, exclude men and resist the male. Yet the Athenian Thesmophoria in fact involved camping on a hillside

for several days - so much for gloomy enclosure - and a recent study by Marcel Detienne suggests that this women's festival only reinforces the male image of woman as chaste wife and mother, faithful but fertile.

Tyrrell's form of structuralism, replete with polarities, codes and inversion, is not sufficiently refined to cope with the subtleties of the Amazon myths. He tries to translate the Amazons into modern terms as women controlling their own reproductive powers - a woman's right to choose - rather than remaining under the power of father or husband. Nevertheless, just as the Greek patriarchy needs to take some women in order to reproduce itself, so the Amazons must, in the absence of AIDS or womb-lensing, find some men. Of the ancient sources, Diodorus presents a neat reverse model in which Amazons have men "just like our married women", who spin and look after the children. Strabo, however, suggests that they meet a neighbouring tribe annually for random copulation, keeping all resulting female babies. Tyrrell's comment on Strabo: "There is nothing to this but reversal". But there is surely far more. There are indeed reversals of the Greek norm of civilized behaviour; Amazons have sex outside, promiscuously, while Greeks marry and have sex indoors. There is also an opposition to the Diodorus model; the other sex can be kept at distance, or shut away within society. There is an allusion to the equation of women, beasts and barbarians; like the beasts, these Amazons have a fixed mating season. There are also into which role-reversal never extends; for example, the Amazons never work in the "male" sphere of agriculture. Finally, there is a kind of mere repetition of the Greek norm; having made the Amazons pregnant, their male captives peremptorily "send them away". The reversal has limits: even Amazons are sometimes given orders by men.

## Myth-mash

**A. W. Price**

**JULIUS A. ELIAS**

*Plato's Defence of Poetry* 261pp. Macmillan, in association with St Antony's College, Oxford. £20. 0333 360680

Roy Harrod had a nice phrase, "the good manners of an institution". One could apply it to welcome the fact that bad books get published as well as good disappointed authors can then blame their stars, and not themselves. Yet Macmillan's, in association with St Antony's College, Oxford, have really gone too far; for this is much the worst book on Plato that I have read.

Plato is famous for identifying "an old quarrel between philosophy and poetry". The philosopher (who is on the side of the moralist) and the aesthete judge art by conflicting criteria, the one demanding that it represent what is good, the other that it give pleasure. Plato has the thought that to enjoy a villain is to enjoy villainy; we may ascribe to him a somewhat naive awareness of the ambivalence typical of art. Hence Julius A. Elias's title is meant to surprise us. He finds in Plato two lines of defence, strong and weak. The weak defence is that poetry can make philosophy palatable to feeble stomachs. More original and arresting is a strong defence that poetry supplies postulates which philosophy cannot prove, that myth is the starting-point of dialectic. If Elias could give substance and support to this claim, Platonic studies would never be the same again.

In fact, he empties the strong defence of content by a bizarre use of the term "myth". Initially his policy is simply open of arms: "My approach is safer: when in doubt, treat the passage as mythical." But his last chapter at last offers a definition: Plato's myths are "those passages in which he writes moral fables in elliptical language to reinforce some point otherwise made more formally, or in which he embodies fundamental presuppositions which cannot be asserted as true because they are the indemonstrable axioms of his system". The second clause is ambiguous between a practice

of presenting axioms in the context of myth and a startling identification of myths with axioms. No reader will believe that Elias means the second without further quotations. The axioms, postulates, and definitions of Euclid may be thought of as mythical because no proof of them is available, and "The theory of recollection is perhaps not a myth in the sense of being a separate axiom or hypothesis of Plato's system." Even Plato's remarks in the *Republic* on the side of feminism are termed "anti-myth"; while modern "myths" include both "the myth of progress" and the scepticism that opposes it, both claims to a monopoly of the truth and "the rival fallibilist myth". Consequently, Elias's rehabilitation of poetry runs out just to be his hook on Plato; and the strong defence reduces to the tautology that axioms are axioms, and theorems theorems.

However, Elias's book has one redeeming vice: it is so written that no one but a reviewer will ever get to the end. He seems to have trouble with his English, which becomes a perpetual obstacle-course. Sometimes the effect is to obscure the sense, as with "Certainly he changed his mind for the worse on a number of issues, for example on the question of the nature of written language"; more often the result is just tiresomely unidiomatic, as when we are told: "It is most improbable that any of the poets or their works criticized by Plato bore the intention or effect of the works of art affecting the ears and eyes of the modern lover of the arts." Such defects are not insuperable, but they are not worth overcoming here.

Or is that unjust to a book which, in retrospect, becomes compulsively engaging? Perhaps my own favourite passage is one about the *Symposium*: "I think we must understand the insistence on early devotion to the beauties of the body as being very much in line with what has been said earlier about the part played by empirical observation in the development and development of knowledge." But the muddle and pretension that make up the book are better epitomized in this unexplained announcement: "It has often been argued that the whole Platonic theory of the soul is a myth and I have no serious quarrel with that, though the reasoning by which it is sometimes reached seems to me dubious."

## Storms over Asia

**Christopher Thorne**

**R. B. SMITH**

*An International History of the Vietnam War: Volume 1. Revolution versus containment, 1955-61* 301pp. Macmillan. £25. 0333 242467

In the United States in particular, the history of the Vietnam war has continued to be surrounded by controversy and no little bitterness. Since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, especially, the thesis (advanced by writers like Colonel Harry Summers) that the war could and should have been won outright has appeared to command a wider appeal than might have been envisaged in 1973; in his *America in Vietnam*, Guenter Lewy, for example, has argued that (*inter alia*) "the bombing of North Vietnam conformed to international law, and the application of American air power was probably the most restrained in modern warfare"; meanwhile, those whose criticisms and condemnations are of a different order from Lewy's own conclusion that "the original decision to intervene in South Vietnam probably was based on a misreading of the national interest" perceive disturbing connections between the "conservative backlash" over the recent past in South-east Asia and Washington's current predilections where Central America is concerned.

Ralph Smith's entry into this turbulent arena (and subsequent volumes will take him to the very centre of it, historically speaking) is greatly to be welcomed. His tone is measured. He has profited from a knowledge of post-1973 developments and revelations without losing sight of the confusion and uncertainties that obtained during the period of which he is writing. His basic premise, that the coming and course of the war can properly be understood only in the context of a complex network of international relations going far wider than those between Washington and Hanoi - or Washington and anywhere else - supplies a much-needed corrective to that insularity and self-absorption which is the hallmark of so much American writing on "diplomatic history", as well as a major ingredient in American approaches to the actual conduct of foreign relations.

To say this is not to suggest, of course, that the book under review is a "definitive" study. Quite apart from the fact that the term would probably be inappropriate for any historical analysis, the author himself is well aware that in this particular case neither the materials nor the perspective yet exist to enable such a claim to be made. Nor does the absence of polemic from the work mean that it is any more. Indeed, some of its central arguments are clearly controversial. For example, even if Hanoi's own revelations since 1975 have made it difficult to minimize the role played by North Vietnam in the creation and policies of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam (and Smith sees it as having been crucial), by no means every historian of the period would choose to emphasize that "there was every reason for the government in Saigon and its American allies to see in the decisions of the Communist side in 1959 a serious threat to their own position and to the Geneva settlement as they understood it"; or to conclude, *inter alia*: "There was a war in Vietnam because that was where the challenge arose, at a moment when Kennedy could not ignore the challenge."

When approaching these and surrounding issues, of course, the question of the nature of the available historical sources arises at the outset. And in this connection, Smith rightly suggests that the *Pentagon Papers*, for all their importance, suffer from the limitation already mentioned: that they are from their concentration on bilateral relations between the United States and Vietnam. One could add, also, that even within the particular field of American foreign relations since the early 1950s, the existence of the Freedom of Information Act, however important it may be from the point of view of civil liberties, by no means guarantees that the recent history of the Republic can be expounded in its full depth and proportion; for what the facilities provided by the Act tend to produce is a focusing upon a few, often spectacular, items

be representative of the wider situation as it existed at the time under study. Oral history, too, despite its considerable attractions for those who have the opportunity to question the likes of Dean Rusk and General Westmoreland, is attended by considerable dangers and limitations - as I have sought to demonstrate (see *The Listener* of January 11, 1979) in relation to the BBC Radio series on Vietnam, "Many Reasons Why", and to the book which was based on it.

For his part, Smith has made considerable use of broadcast and printed material which emanated from Communist states during the 1950s and 60s. These sources, too, obviously need to be handled gingerly, and he has done so, the work as a whole being impressive for the care which is displayed in the weighing of evidence and the shaping, accordingly, of conclusions of a more or a less tentative or qualified nature.

Partly on the basis of these Communist broadcasts and publications, Smith devotes a considerable proportion of the book to examining both domestic and international developments among the states in question after the 1954 Geneva conference on Indochina, re-

the concept of containment, these are topics which have already received a great deal of attention, though many questions remain. (For example, did an opportunity exist in 1956-57 to effect an improvement in relations between Washington and the Chinese Communists, as some American historians believe had been the case also in 1944-45?) Smith himself does not seek to cover this ground extensively, which is understandable, though in overall terms it could be argued that he has placed too little emphasis on developments a few years before the beginning of his chosen period, when Acheson in 1949-50 failed in his attempt to restrict the United States' line of defence in the Far East to an off-shore one which would have excluded both Taiwan and Indochina, as well as the Korean peninsula.

Although it also follows from Smith's premise and perspective that the book devotes less attention than many others on the origins of the war to political, economic and social conditions in South Vietnam, and to American dealings with Diem after the Geneva accords, these topics are not neglected. And for all that he stresses the central role of Hanoi in the creation of the National Liberation Front, Smith



Captain Peter Shilton of the Australian Training Team, together with Captain Ngoc, leader of South Vietnamese Montagnard troops, questioning a Montagnard village chief; reproduced from *The Team: Australian Army advisers in Vietnam 1962-1972* by Ian McNeill (534pp. University of Queensland Press, \$43.95. 0 7022 17573).

lating them to the worsening of the Cold War in 1958, for example, and to "national liberation movements" in the Third World generally, as well as to the policies pursued by Hanoi. In particular, he demonstrates how increasing tension between the Soviet Union and China, followed by the emergence of an open rift between them in 1961, benefited those members of the North Vietnamese leadership who wished drastically to intensify the struggle to undermine the Diem régime in the South. Neither Moscow nor Peking "could afford to be excluded from the next phase of the Vietnamese revolution", quite apart from other considerations which were leading both of them to abandon a policy of restraint where Indochina as a whole was concerned. At the same time, fierce arguments among the North Vietnamese themselves - over land reform and local administration, for example, and involving, Smith believes, the makings of a confrontation between party and army - were accompanied by the growing influence of those like Le Duan who were insisting on the indivisibility of the revolution among the people of Vietnam.

For Hanoi also, as indeed for Washington, Moscow and Peking, the crisis that was gathering pace in 1958-59 involved other parts of what had been French Indochina. And it is another of the merits of the book that it brings out clearly the importance of this period of developments that were taking place in Laos, where, as Smith observes, the Americans, "by helping to destroy the coalition of Souvanna Phouma and Souphanouvong, played into the hands of those Chinese and North Vietnamese leaders whose aim was a new phase of revolution in South-East Asia". As for the place occupied by China itself in American thinking, and the extension to the Far East generally of

acknowledges that the extent of the challenge that the Front could pose to Diem and Washington alike was made possible only because it was able "to mobilise substantial grassroots support" which derived from the economic and political grievances of people in the South.

If it was there, in South Vietnam, that, to use a phrase of the author's, "the various strands of the global conflict came together" for those directing the policies of the United States, the setting was far from propitious from their point of view. As had already been the case with Chiang Kai-shek in China, the cause of freedom would be pursued by championing those whose own position rested upon its negation. Moreover, and again as had been the case with Chiang's Kuomintang régime, Washington's priorities and perceptions of the available alternatives, when placed alongside those of the Asian protégé in question, would ensure that the latter's high degree of dependence on American aid would not be matched by a readiness to accede to American wishes over critical issues of domestic politics. Not least, that unwritten rule of American Far Eastern policy that had been observed up until 1950 (even when Chiang Kai-shek's government had looked like collapsing before a new Japanese offensive in 1944; even by those Republicans who had clamoured for more support to be given to Chiang during the civil war in China between 1945 and 1949) was about to be broken for the second time: the rule of not becoming directly involved in a land war on the Asian mainland.

One awaits with some impatience Dr Smith's forthcoming account of the international dimensions of the conflict that ensued, and of the defeat it brought to the greatest military power the world had ever seen.



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# Gentlewomen all

Gillian Avery

MARTHA WESTWATER  
The Wilson Sisters  
250pp. Athens: Ohio University Press (distributed in the UK by International Book Distributors). \$38.96.  
VIRGINIA SUTTEES  
The Ludovisi Goddess: The life of Louise Lady Ashburton  
210pp. Salisbury: Michael Russell. £9.95.  
085955 1059

Victorian upper-class women had no need to fight for their sex's rights: their position was already secure, privileged and influential. Those of them who actively bothered to oppose the suffrage movement held that if women attempted to take up a position alongside men they would lose their moral ascendancy and bring disruption to family life. Worst of all, the distinction between classes would disappear and the whole fabric of society would crumble. Many Victorians, particularly the women, undoubtedly felt these distinctions were God-ordained. To read the novels of Charlotte Yonge, for instance, is sometimes to wonder whether, for all the lofty principles so solemnly reiterated, it was not the preservation of the social status quo that ultimately mattered most to her, so marked was her lack of charity (and in this she was typical of her class and her age) towards those on a lower rung of the social ladder who might be suspected of wishing to inch themselves up.

Martha Westwater in *The Wilson Sisters* has taken the journal of Eliza Wilson Begehot and used it to make a study of the attitudes, political and social, of Eliza and her five sisters. In many ways their outlook was very similar to that of Charlotte Yonge. Like her they were talented, well-educated women with some intellectual attainments and high ideals, who de-

tested and dismissed the new thinking on women, though one at least of them supported the women's colleges at Cambridge, whereas Charlotte Yonge never really reconciled herself to the thought of gentlewomen being educated outside the home because of the dangerous mixing of social classes that would ensue. But Miss Yonge never married, had very little contact with intellectual equals and hardly moved outside the small Hampshire village where she was born. The Wilson sisters on the other hand all married men of affairs (and were themselves the daughters of James Wilson, the political economist, founder of the *Economist*). They were well travelled and had the entrée into intellectual and artistic circles. But like Miss Yonge they remained early Victorians all their lives, even in their style of dressing.

Eliza married Walter Begehot. It was not a happy marriage. He had remorseless energy; she was lethargic and gave herself up to ill-health. She was also very conscious of not being clever enough for him and was sadly aware that his mother, whose sanity was precarious and to a certain extent dependent upon his loving care, had first place in his affections. The marriage was childless. Begehot, dying in 1877, survived his mother by only seven years, but Eliza lived on until 1921, and though she devoted herself to keeping her husband's name alive she chose to overlook the fact that in the year before his death he had taken up the cause of female suffrage.

Sophie married William Halsey of the Indian Service. She "fell victim to a restlessness and irritability peculiar to the Anglo-Indian woman", and soon found that William was not the burra sahib she had hoped; besides, he was hopeless with money. Sybil Colefax, their youngest child, recalled: "My father worked, my mother wept, and I played on the floor and knew nothing." It was Sybil who achieved the position her aunts and mother coveted - of a distinguished society hostess.

Emilie - Mrs Russell Barrington - was the one who worked hardest to make her mark as a hostess, but with artistic talents and a fondness for novels to her credit, she still met with little success. She formed an obsessive attachment, first to Watts, then to Leighton, being neighbour to both in Hollis Park. This drove Watts to Guildford, and Leighton to say, "I scarcely dare to go to bed." She was much given to philanthropy, though Octavia Hill found her meddlesome ways very trying. Her biographer likens her to Mrs Proudie.

Zoe married an Anglican priest who moved (preceded by Zoe) from Ritualism to the Church of Rome; both were active essayists and contributed to literary journals of their time. Julia married William Rathbone Greg, a civil servant and man of letters, with whom she had been on intimate (though perhaps not physical) terms for many years while his first wife still lived. Alas, he died insane seven years later, leaving her with the only really satisfactory child that the sisters between them produced - Walter, who became one of the most eminent bibliographers of his time. Matilda devoted herself to culture, society and philanthropy, married in her fifties a Kentish country gentleman, and occupied her last years (she died in 1923) with trying to teach the amazed villagers to dance the cotillion.

The sisters' link with the anti-suffrage movement is rather tenuous, though Sister Westwater gives a chapter to "Tea and Antisuffrage Sympathy". They come over as non-political beings, contenting themselves with philanthropy and leaving political sentiments to men. But from meagre materials (Eliza's journal is apparently stupefyingly dull) she has contrived a fascinating picture of Victorian upper-class life, and her knowledge of and feeling for the period are impressive.

Virginia Suttees's account of Louisa Lady Ashburton, *The Ludovisi Goddess*, cannot be said to be so successful, though she is a more practised hand. Perhaps she was too close to

her materials, perhaps the materials were too rich, but what we get is a collage of quotations from letters, journals and account books, resulting in a somewhat dazzling mosaic of Victorian society from which the main character, though seemingly a dominant personality, emerges cloudily. Louisa Stewart-Mackenzie (to whose remarkable onerous the three opening chapters are devoted) was called the Ludovisi Goddess by an adoring female admirer. (Like many Victorian women - Emilie Wilson was one of them - she had passionate relationships with others of her sex.) She yearned to marry William Stirling-Maxwell, but his affections were directed elsewhere, and in 1857, she being by then thirty and with seemingly not very bright prospects, set out to woo Lord Ashburton, some twenty-eight years her senior and prestruted by the death of his wife, Harriet. By the following year he was hers - a conquest which left Landseer, with whom she had flirted and who, it seems, expected to marry her, very disconsolate. The material prospects were alluring, the Bath fortune was immense, but Lord Ashburton was a semi-invalid, crippled with gout, and at the age of thirty-seven she was a widow with a small daughter and a very considerable fortune. Thereafter the story is of her building ventures (she was arbitrary, imperious and extravagant) and of her encounters with notables of the time as Carlyle, Edward Law, Augustus Hare, the various unfortunate architects whom she employed, and Browning. The usual story is that Browning wished to marry her, and was refused, but Virginia Suttees deduces that she pursued him, and being rejected "exploded in all the madness of wounded vanity", as Browning himself ruefully recorded. The photographs suggest a strong-willed, domineering personality. Despite the (uncharacteristic) petulance and solititude she displayed in her dealings with the Carlyles, she was probably a better person as the subject of a biography than as an acquaintance or patron.

## Sovereign touches

Steven Runciman

GERARD NOEL  
Eon: Spain's English queen  
323pp. Constable. £10.95.  
009 464070 X  
S. W. JACKMAN  
The People's Princess: A portrait of H.R.H. Princess Mary, Duchess of Teck  
213pp. Bournemouth: Kensal Press. £12.50.  
0946041 199

It is ironic that Queen Victoria, most successful of nineteenth-century sovereigns, should have contributed to the fall of two of Europe's oldest monarchies through her transmission of haemophilia to so many of her descendants. The Russian monarchy would probably have come to its end even if the Tsarevich had not been stricken; but the disease undoubtedly played a large part in the collapse of the Spanish throne. In this well-researched life of Queen Ene, Gerard Noel brings out clearly the problems and the unhappiness that it caused to the Spanish Royal family and especially to the Queen.

It seems certain that King Alfonso XIII was well aware of the risk that he was taking when he married in 1906 Ene of Battenberg, Queen Victoria's youngest granddaughter. But having been rejected by his first choice for a bride, Princess Patricia of Connaught, he fell in love with Ene's blood beauty and ignored all warnings. It would have been better for them both had they not married each other. The King was bitterly grieved when their eldest son proved to be haemophilic. He was naturally volatile, with little sense of self-discipline or of loyalty; and his instability soon affected both his personal and his political life. For the Queen it was worse. Of her four sons the eldest and the youngest both had the disease; and her second son, Don Jaime, was made deaf and dumb by an attack of mastoiditis when he was aged three. The King blamed her for it all; and so, when the family tragedies became known, did the general public. She had nowhere any consolation. The Queen Mother, a Habsburg by

birth, had disliked the marriage and continued to dominate what was the stiffest and most rigid Court in Europe, in which Queen Ene was made to feel an alien. Spanish high society, apart from a few Anglophile families, was equally unwelcoming.

The marriage had started appallingly, with a bomb thrown at the royal carriage as it drove in procession from the ceremony. The Queen and the King were unharmed; but many of their entourage were killed, and her wedding-dress was spattered with blood. Her controlled reaction to the horror disappointed the Spanish public who expected a more emotional scene. Her rightly suspected dislike of bullfighting added to her unpopularity. Meanwhile the King's notorious infidelities were a constant humiliation to her. Nevertheless, in time she won the respect of the Spaniards, for her social work - in particular the organization of an efficient nursing system - and for her political views, which were known to be more enlightened than those of the King. By 1931 she was more popular than he. But by then it was too late. The local elections in April that year made it clear, to the King's surprise, that Spain no longer wanted a monarchy. He and his family had to go into exile.

Queen Ene lived on for another thirty-seven years. Before the end of 1931 she and the King separated, though they later met from time to time, rather stiffly, on family occasions, and she seems to have been present at his deathbed in 1941. She lived for a while in London and in Rome before finally settling in Lausanne. Any hope that the Spanish Civil War would restore the monarchy was soon dashed by Franco; and her third son, Don Juan, who became the accepted head of the family, was far too liberal to get on with the Dictator. But she lived on to realize that her grandson, Juan Carlos, was destined to restore the monarchy; and she herself, two months before her death, was allowed to visit Spain for the christening of his son. The enthusiasm with which she was welcomed must have compensated for much of her past misery.

Mr Noel tells the story competently and shrewdly. I am saddened personally by his

attack on Beatrice of Saxe-Coburg, (or Edinburgh), wife of the Infante Alfonso of Orleans, whom he represents as a chief villainess in encouraging King Alfonso's infidelities. The Infante certainly tried to introduce him to brighter company, in a way that was often unkind to the Queen and shocking to the Queen Mother. But she was not a procuress; and Queen Ene never bore the same grudge against her that she bore against Donna Sol, Alba's sister. She knew that I visited the Infantes of Orleans most years, and when I saw her she would ask very affectionately about the Infante - whose intelligence and whose loyalty to the King she admired - and with a certain smile about the Infante, who, she once told me, had been a tower of strength at the time of the flight from Madrid in 1931. I suspect that some of Mr Noel's information came from Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, who disliked her Edinburgh cousins, especially as her brother, the Duke of Albany, had quarrelled with them over the Saxe-Coburg inheritance; Princess Alice's loyalty to Queen Ene was boundless.

I also think that Mr Noel makes Queen Ene in her old age seem a duller person than she was. Noel Coward dismissed her as a bore; but he was never a good listener. If one let the Queen talk on she could be very good company, given to shrewd and amusing comments, which she would accompany with her startlingly raucous laugh. She was greatly entertained when Franco, writing to console with her on her mother's death, began the letter with the full courtesies correct for a Spaniard writing to his Queen; but ended it as "Your loving brother, Francisco Franco". She complained to me once that people would praise Franco for her being a faithful husband. "He is in love with her," she said, "so of course he is faithful. I see no merit in that." Her own experience of married life had been different.

Few people nowadays know anything of Princess Mary, Duchess of Teck, except that she was the mother of Queen Mary. But in fact she played a large part, in more than one sense, in Victorian life. The younger daughter of the Duke of Cambridge, George III's youngest

son, she was for many years the only princess in Britain available for opening bazaars and the like, till the Queen's own daughters grew up, and they, with their stern upbringing, never took on the task with the panache that Pat Mary, as the public called her, displayed. For ninety years her vast size frightened away suitors, except for Victor Emmanuel of Italy, who liked women large. But neither the Queen nor she herself would consider marriage to a Catholic monarch. Eventually they found for her Francis, Duke of Teck, the son of a Prince of Württemberg by a Hungarian Countess, a handsome and talented man who was obsessed by having only a semi-royal status.

Queen Victoria was fond of Mary, though she disapproved of her love for publicity and still more of her wild extravagance. But the public loved her. In my young days I remember in several great houses being shown comedies in which the huge princess had stuck. Her final triumph came when her daughter Mary was selected to be the bride of the Duke of York, the successive heirs to the British throne.

S. W. Jackman gives a pleasant, if slightly carelessly written, account of her life. The book has some interesting, but not always relevant illustrations - there is a portrait of Kaiser Wilhelm II, who does not feature in the text and whose inclusion is justified by a caption which says, untruthfully, that he was friendly to the Tecks. The publishers have not done their job very well. The index is inadequate and not always accurate. The blurb on the dust-cover informs us that the Duchess married her daughter Sophie to the Duke of York. What would Queen Mary have thought of that?

King Alfonso XIII's polo-playing circle included Vernon Willey, 2nd (and last) Baron Belper (1854-1982). Juliet Fox-Hutchinson's *Remembering Vernon: A Memoir of Lord Belper* (106pp. Stockfield: Oriol Press. £6.95. 0 8531 209 4) is a brief biography and record of a thirty-year friendship with that energetic hunting hound owner, industrialist and public servant (and member in both Houses of Parliament).

## The exuberant neologist

Robin Robbins

SIR THOMAS URQUHART OF CROMARTY  
The Jewel  
Edited by R. D. S. Jack and R. J. Lyall  
252pp. Scottish Academic Press. £8.75.  
0707303273

"We shall with few years be fain to learn Latin to understand English" was the ironic apprehension of Sir Thomas Browne in 1646. It might have been reinforced for him (and extended to include Greek) by the original works of Sir Thomas Urquhart: *The Trisolaris*, *Panochronochanon*, *Ekkubalauron*: or, *The Discovery of A most exquisite Jewel . . . Serving in this place, To frontal a Vindication of the honour of Scotland, and Logopandeteleia*, all - not only in their titles but in the course of the gargantuan sentences of which they are constituted - yswlow in a tumult of coinages. Browne offered as excuses for his own contributions to the language, such as *electricity* and *computer*, the newness and abstrusity of his scientific subjects, but such a justification is seldom applicable to his voluble amateur contemporary.

It is indeed paradoxical that in the third of these treatises (whose title is necessarily shortened as *The Jewel*), devoted ostensibly as in part it is to the cause of universal intelligibility, the classical lexica should have been ransacked for adaptations and adoptions, single and hybrid, which must have rendered the text frustratingly opaque to anyone who had not shared Urquhart's privileged education at King's College, Aberdeen. In the twenty-third of the 134 articles arguing the case for a universal language he enlists (rather late) with the anti-Ciceronians: "When an exuberant spirit would to any high researched conceit adapt a peculiar word of his own coining, he is branded with incivility". His combative if not patrician disposition seems such restraint, and, though he goes on to argue, as Browne would, against the damage inflicted on learning by a preference for circumlocution over conveniently single new words, it is the exuberant spirit rather than the teacher or scholar in Urquhart that forces neologisms on his reader. Similarly, though the search for universal characters and languages in the seventeenth century partook of a distrust of rhetoric without solid content, Urquhart craves without remorse.

That the density of his coinages is proportional rather to emotional heat than to intellectual light may be shown simply by listing the most extreme occasions: in four passages against the Presbyterians (pp 49f, 89, 186, 187) in the present edition there are some twenty-six neologisms; in sixteen lines (p 153) on a Scot defeating Roman theologians there are five; denouncing scholars who oppose Urquhart (p 71) produces four in ten lines, abuse of financiers (he was a chronic debtor) another four. The almost slavering description of Crichton's "courtship" requires seven, the mistress's bosom another three, while the successful public performance of that hero (with whom the author obviously identifies, pp 117f) prompts another dozen. Above all, in self-praise and rhetorical *excessus* (pp 181, 205f), Urquhart indulges in some twenty-five coinages - not to mention ten in the articles on word-coinage quoted above.

Though the present editors have rightly done their duty in glossing most (not all, alas) of Urquhart's obscure words, it seems to be with him as Leo Spitzer saw it was with the *Kluge*: (though far superior) personality of Rabelais when minting suitably scornful terms for his opponents in the Sorbonne: "By explaining every coinage separately, the commentators lose sight of . . . the jungle which Rabelais must have had before his eyes, teeming with viperlike, hydra-like, shapes". For Urquhart, writing from prison in the hope of gaining release as a man of worth and learning, the menagerie he was trying to tame by plucking it down on paper contained the Presbyterians who harassed him in Scotland, the warrers of London and Edinburgh, and anyone who might dispute his credentials as a scholar.

In this third respect he might well feel as Rabelais in the other two. The Rabelais

from a shrewd and erudite standpoint, but, though some have alleged satire of scholarship in Urquhart's works, the ridiculousness of his indubitably earnest attempts to gain a serious academic reputation casts doubt on his will or fitness to satirize learning in general. There is no doubt that he longed to be accepted into its establishment, as into those of politics and religion.

"The Jewel" of his cumbersome title refers to the Preface to a promised but never-produced work on a universal language, but it will already be clear even to those new to the little volume published in 1652 that it ranged far more widely. Its plain purpose was to secure Urquhart's release from prison after the Battle of Worcester, the restitution of his property, and protection from the elders of the kirk in Scotland. After the widespread acceptance of such caricatures of his nation as John Cleveland's "The Rebel Scot", Urquhart felt it necessary not only to prove his personal worth as a scholar but, as his title-page announces, to vindicate the honour of Scotland by enumerating its worthies (mercenaries and pedants for his choice) and dismissing its discreditable representatives (bankers and Presbyterians). The proposal of a universal language, possibly snapped up in embryo from Francis Lodwick's just-published *Ground-work . . . For the Framing of a New Perfect Language*, thus constitutes little more than a twentieth of Urquhart's book, bulked out (he would have said "out-bulked") as it is with more than twice as much self-praise and special pleading (through a fictitious third person), and ten times as much on worthy and unworthy Scots. In fact, almost as much space is taken up reproducing Francis Bacon's speeches supporting a Union of England and Scotland as with the universal language.

We have here an imposing demonstration of how to pad out a flimsy project (or, in recent jargon, "generate a discourse"). The most frequent device for this purpose is the catalogue: fake genealogies, the articles of the universal language, twenty-two "Infallible principles" on which "are grounded the author's most reasonable demands", an eight-page list of Scots mercenaries in Northern Europe, the theatrical characters acted by Crichton, the blazon of his mistress, Scots mercenaries in Southern Europe, Scots writers, the works of Alexander Ross, the "infallible principles" recapitulated, the figures and tropes he could have used, final lists of Scots mercenaries - the device seems impudent when used twice in a mere review, but forms between a third and a half of Urquhart's work.

Here we may apply Richard Ohmann's division of writers into "continuity-seekers" and "similarity seekers". In this disjointed book, Urquhart, like G. B. Shaw, is quick to categorize by similarity rather than contiguity, to overgeneralize, and would have agreed with his fellow Celt that men must "impose social order or die". The parallel correspondences are connected: in Urquhart's cataloguing as in Shaw's we may see an anxiety for order, evinced in the seventeenth-century laird and royalist by his hierarchical, militarist values, as by his desire to have the world speak one highly organized tongue. A further temperamental affinity with Shaw appears in Urquhart's automatic dependence on hyperbole, in a style full of all-or-nothing words, intensifying adverbs, and phrases of extreme degree.

Of course, the main reason for any edition of *The Jewel* must be its central role of the Admirable Crichton (the 1652 spelling), the heroic legend of the same of Scots soldier-scholars, their ensnared by Sir Philip Sidney, and like him and Hamlet, doomed to an early death. The reason for the presence in *The Jewel* of this fabulous courtier, fighter, learned disputant, lover, and upholder of the authoritarian *stans quo*, is shrewdly noted in the introduction: "Freeing Urquhart from his many enemies . . . permit our hero to develop into another Crichton, conferring on the court of Cromwell all the glory achieved by the latter for Mantua." Yet, celebrated as the story is, it belongs, with its "one-damned-thing-after-another" method of narration, to the age of Thomas Nashe's *Unfortunate Traveller* rather than to that of Defoe's *Colonel Jack*.

long periodic sentences, but that, crude as it is, may be seen in a glance at the connective words which restart the flow after each full point. They support his cumbersome syntactical constructions, rather than varying or pushing on the story: sentences often begin with a subordinate clause (over a quarter in the Crichton episode are introduced with a temporal word or phrase, another third with deictic words - *the, this, that* etc - or phrases), but seldom with a pronoun, which would too soon bring on the main verb - a gratification which he delights to delay. (It could well have been of Urquhart that, at the other extreme, Ernest Hemingway declared: "Prose is architecture. And the age of the baroque is dead.") The sacrifice of narrative suspense to something else is seen at large in the interpolation of the blazon of Crichton's mistress at an inappropriately critical point (except for sado-masochists) - not in the bedroom but when he has been stabbed.

Although the editors in their entertaining and informative introduction name some earlier promoters of a universal language (belying Urquhart's boast that his idea "never hitherto hath been so much as thought upon by any"), they do not specify his derivations or originalities: however, rather than being sent for his context directly to the works of James Knowlson and Vivian Salmon, the non-specialist reader might more helpfully have been told, for instance, that in 1652 Lodwick, like Urquhart, wished things to be named according to their qualities and "their order in nature" (*Ground-work*, p10), and that both men owed this principle to the originator of the project, Marin Mersenne, in his *Harmonie universelle* of 1636. We might also have been told that Urquhart's ideas on "words expressive of herbs" suggestively echo earlier work by Cyprian Kinner and William Petty. We might, too, have liked some idea as to whether Urquhart knew the Aberdonian George Dalgarno, who at the same time was working in Oxford on a universal language.

Another possible though minor connection is left unexplored when the introduction simply notes as a "striking metaphor" Urquhart's figure of a city, divided into streets, lanes, houses, storeys, and rooms, as an organizing principle for his language. The possibility of using a city, rather than the more usual house, as a memory device is mentioned in passing by Quintilian, but though Knowlson dismisses it as "common enough", Frances Yates, who in *The Art of Memory* noted Paolo Rossi's perception of direct links between the mnemotechnical tradition and the universal language movement, produced as an example only Tommaso Campanella's *La città del sole*. In which all human knowledge and achievement is represented on the concentric walls of his city. Is there any evidence that Urquhart knew and appreciated Campanella's stringently ordered city-state, with its religious impartiality that foreshadows Crichton's?

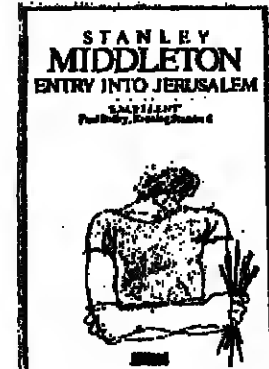
This new text is, unhappily, not without errors (eg, every for ever, word for words, mairners for manner, on pp 63f). As regards the commentary, the editors unaccountably assume that Urquhart's citation of Polydore Vergil alongside Pindar's *Res Memorabiles* alludes to the former's history of England rather than *De inventoribus rerum*. And they should kick themselves for asserting of Urquhart's "nor is Master Ogilvy to be forgot": "Ironically, no seventeenth-century vernacular poet of this name is now recorded, and neither the Virgilian nor the Aesopian translations survive" - anyone dealing with Urquhart must be alive to a capacity for inaccuracy which far exceeds the standard variation of *v for b* in the name of John Ogilby, who earned nearly six columns in the *DNB*, his Virgil having been published in 1649, and his Aesop in 1651. In a work so riddled with names and debts, lists, indexes of people and sources would have been welcome helps.

Nevertheless, R. D. S. Jack and R. J. Lyall are entitled to feel pleased with their illuminating introduction and usually full commentary. The Scottish Academic Press and Clark Constable have between them produced a handsome book at an extraordinarily old-fashioned, but it is to say affordable, price. Though *The Jewel* may belong in the pathology museum of literature, it has been here most elegantly bottled

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196pp. Princeton University Press. £18.50.  
0691 06578 0

Fifteen years ago John V. Fleming published a substantial and innovative study of the *Roman de la Rose* in which he asserted, principally on the basis of an examination of its pictorial iconography, that the poem had been persistently misunderstood for the preceding five hundred years, and that it was evidently an allegory of the Fall of Man. His new book is perhaps less ambitious in its claims, less Robertsonian in its fervour, and certainly less global in its approach, but at the same time it is much more rigorous and convincing in its methods. While not departing radically from the position that he had earlier reached, Fleming now addresses himself with far greater precision to the evidence of the text, or more exactly, of some of those 3,000 lines at the beginning of Jean de Meun's part of it which constitute the debate between Reason and the lover.

It is fundamental to Fleming's view that, of the many allegorical figures who appear in the course of the lover's extended dream, Reason is the only one who speaks with such authority as to be compelling, and that consequently a proper understanding of her message will be conducive to a proper understanding of the poem as a whole. It is in his view ironic that the wretched lover is incapable of taking Reason's lessons seriously, and that he therefore does not understand the import of his oneiric adventure; on the other hand, however, Fleming is at pains to emphasize that his madness and moral culpability should not be seen, as they have by many critics, as in any way vitiating the spiritual authority of Reason, who is thus the commanding figure of the poem's didactic purpose.

His study opens with an agreeably understated attack on what he calls the Ithacan Heresy (whose chief protagonists are his critics at Corollé, led by Winthrop Wetherbee). The Ithacan Heresy consists, among other errors, of precisely the confusion as to the standing of the lover mentioned above, and of an allegedly insufficient attention to textual detail. For Fleming, the "sapiential theme" of the *Rose* is clear: he establishes beyond dispute Reason's descent from the figure of Philosophy in Boethius's *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, whom he sees as an unequivocal representation of Christian wisdom, deriving in turn from St Augustine's *Soliloquy*, which itself draws its inspiration from Cicero. Furthermore, the dialogue form of Jean de Meun's debate equally owes its origins to Boethius, Augustine and Cicero. At the same time, Fleming shows that Jean also drew on Aelred of Rievaulx's *De spirituali amicitia*, which he translated, and thus had access to a further Augustinian transformer of Cicero. In all this dense undergrowth of literary heritage, however, he discerns the presence of what (in a doubtless ironic reference to the jargon of certain of the heretics) he calls a supertext: the commanding but implicit presence of Augustine's *Confessions*, which controls Jean's use of Aelred and Cicero alike, and itself bears witness to its author's clandestine competition with Virgil. By a complex but elegant elucidation of textual parallels and implicit echoes, Fleming thus roots the *Rose*, or at least that stem of it with which he is concerned, firmly in the deepest traditions of medieval Christian classicism.

The second half of the study first explores further the implications of the use of Augustinian and Ciceronian models, especially in the context of the relationship between words and things in the text; the lover, who was shocked by Reason's explicit censure of the sexual organs, is once again shown to be at fault in his

reasoning. Secondly, in an unashamedly speculative final chapter, Fleming investigates the possibility that Petrarch's *Secretum*, a dialogue between the literary figures of Augustine and Francisus in the presence of Truth, was based on the debate between Reason and the lover in the *Roman de la Rose*. He points out that the *Secretum* is far closer to Augustine's *Soliloquy* than to his *Confessions*, and certainly constructs a very interesting case for Petrarch (whose knowledge of the *Rose* is incontrovertible) having modelled his *Franciscus* at least in part upon that "obtusely, persistently and invincibly wrongheaded" first-person narrator who is the unwaking dreamer of the romance. At the very least, Petrarch was clearly drawing on the same Augustinian tradition as Jean de Meun.

Thus for Fleming, the classical tradition which is adapted for a Christian purpose in the

## Among the equivocations

Gaston Hall

G. J. MALLINSON  
The Comedies of Corneille: Experiments in the comic  
248pp. Manchester University Press. £25.  
07190 0992 8

Even before this tercentenary year of Pierre Corneille's death, his early achievements in comedy (long overshadowed by his more famous tragedies) had begun to emerge from relative neglect. Their irony, the *équivoques* to which Corneille himself draws attention, their meta-theatre and baroque illusionism had attracted French producers and foreign critics. G. J. Mallinson's painstaking reappraisal opens with a conscientious review of recent criticism and seeks, by stressing not only verbal ambiguities and role-playing within roles, but elements of parody and innovation in the context of contemporary dramatic literature, to show Corneille's refinement of comic techniques while generally avoiding recourse to farce. This is very much the book of a literary historian ("Corneille's comedies were written at a particularly fruitful period of French literature"). It is full of information about the comedies. It contains insights into their literary relation to other scripted drama of the period, which no one to my knowledge has presented better. But it is strangely (and I think lamentably) silent on essential aspects of staging.

A chapter is devoted to each of the eight comedies from *Mélite* to *La Suite du Menteur*, bringing out (the author argues) the innovative and comic aspects of each play in turn; but I find little if anything suggesting that the discovery scene of *La Galerie du Palais*, for example, must have been innovative in contrast with the *décor simultané* still used seasons later in *Le*

*Roman de la Rose* is couched in an ironic proterptic: confronted with the impeccable arguments of Reason, the lover should be capable of discovering and knowing the truth, yet at the end of this debate he is left uncertain and depressed; despite so much sweet reasonableness he is unconvinced. Fleming's book too is argued with an elegant dose of sweet reasonableness, and the self-conscious irony of its proterptic is that it will almost certainly leave the Ithacans unconvinced. Whether or not we side with the heretics, this new and intensive reading of a number of important passages in a crucial section of Jean de Meun's poem has a great deal to commend it both in purely scholarly and in wider literary terms. But whether it will turn out to hold the key to the whole work will doubtless depend, as Fleming himself admits, on further detailed readings of equally high quality.

*Cid*, while both methods of staging contrast with the successive illusionist *décor*s used evidently in 1636 at the Palais-Cardinal for Desmarets's *Aspasie*. Perhaps *L'illusion comique* performed at the Marais Theatre the same year does show "the actor triumphant", but we really need to consider how the text related to the stage decoration within a choice of conventions before concepts like illusion and innovation can be meaningfully discussed with reference to theatre history.

Dr Mallinson usually writes clearly, avoiding jargon, but with a curious lack of sophistication in critical vocabulary for a writer so intent upon the linguistic implications of the texts. Very little of Corneille's poetry and wit permeates his prose. The main value of the book (which is considerable) is in its erudition, its information, its soundly linking Corneille's comedies with so many of the plays by his contemporaries. It is less satisfactory in relating the comedies to the life and language of Corneille's times, a connection which Corneille stressed in calling *Mélite*, for instance, "une peinture de la conversation des honnêtes gens". Probably the "style naïf" in question owes more to reading than to conversation, but Corneille's assertion by its nature needs some effort at establishing controls—social for the urban gentry indicated and linguistic for their speech. Parody on the other hand is shown to be a feature more widely shared with other comedies than is commonly assumed for this period and more important.

Mallinson's book is unlikely to please critics of a structuralist or semiotic bent, champions of literary theory, or specialists in theatre studies and drama departments. But readers in any of those categories more inclined to seek an understanding of these skilful and rewarding plays than to insist on a single approach to dramatic literature may find much of value in it.

## Like the ancients

Anthony Levi

GRAHAME CASTOR and TERENCE CAVE  
(Editors)  
Neo-Latin and the Vernacular in Renaissance France  
279pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £22.50.  
019 815780 0

The best piece in this volume, which is a disguised *Festschrift* for J.D. MacFarlane, recently retired Professor of French at Oxford, is the introduction, which is unsigned, but presumably the work of the two editors.

Aside from that, J.C. Margolin on Budé has produced one of his better pieces, Margaret Mann Phillips who writes on Bourbon does not

dissappoint, Dominic Baker-Smith is at his most ingenious on Lyon 1539-43, and the article by J. Ijsewijn, G. Tournoy and M. de Schlepper on Dorat is both erudite and interesting. Carol Clark's brief essay on Erasmus's use of simile is characteristically intelligent, although not uncontroversial.

The book is written in English and French, and the copious Latin quotations are translated for us—which raises a serious point. Neo-Latin texts in sixteenth-century France were written by people who had read the works of such as Scotus and Ockham, but it seems unlikely that many of the fourteen authors in this collection has read much even of Augustine, let alone authors who wrote in Latin between the ninth and the sixteenth centuries. Neo-Latin writing was, as the editors claim, a "vigorous medium for intellectual and literary expression", but none of the contributors can say why, because they do not know the literature their subjects were writing against, and consequently too often confine themselves to the trivial. They never really discuss why their authors chose to write in humanist prose, or why they chose the antique models they did choose. Rabelais, after all, said many of the same things in demotic French.

## With the archetypes

Philip Thody

ZOE OLDENBOURG  
Que nous est Héculé? ou un plaideur pour l'humain  
205pp. Paris: Gallimard, 75fr.  
207 07098 4

As its title suggests, this collection of six essays by the author of *La Pierre angulaire* (The Corner Stone) takes up the oddest question asked by the most intelligent character in Shakespeare. For it is not really all that difficult to explain why we are moved by the recital of the misfortunes of people who are not only personally unknown to us but who may well never have existed. Hamlet, of course, asks the question in a mood of self-pitying bewilderment, which explains why he can't answer it. How much more, he reflects, would the Player King be moved if he had the cause for grief which afflicts the Prince of Denmark, and is perhaps a key to his character to be reminded of how self-centred he is. Zoe Oldenbourg not only rephrases the question—"What's Hebe to us?"—but also, by giving her essay the subtitle of "A plea for what is human", proposes an answer.

We are, she argues, moved by what we read about in literature because it is a defining characteristic of human beings to make sense of their experience through the free workings of their imagination. By participating in the suffering of Oedipus, Raskolnikov or Emma Bovary, we are giving proof of our freedom by demonstrating that "the controlled use of language remains the last instrument which cannot be brought under subjection by external constraint". At the same time, we are also shown, especially in the case of Hamlet or Don Quixote, that "the sublime archetypes in which man finds his true identity are made of imagination and dreams". In other words, we are reminding ourselves that human beings prove their humanity by making up stories which other human beings recognize as true; and vice versa.

The argument here is similar to one put forward by Michel Tournier, an author whose Mme Oldenbourg mentions and with whom she has obvious affinities. In his 1979 collection of autobiographical essays *Le Vent paradoxal*, For Tournier contends that even people who have never heard of Werther or of Tristan and Isolde would never "fall in love" if the social atmosphere in which we all grow up in the Western World were not somehow bathed in the great myths of romantic passion. Oldenbourg expresses a comparable idea in a more belligerent spirit when she accuses Marx, Freud and modern technology of cutting us off from "the enormous socio-cultural background which every human being absorbs from the first years of his life", and of thus immeasurably impoverishing mankind. Her book is, indeed, as much an attack on the modern world in general as a plea for traditional humanistic values in art and education, and there are times when one can, as Bertie Wooster's Uncle Tom Travers was already wont to observe in the 1930s, feel civilization plunging into the melting-pot.

I suppose anyone might feel a bit like this who lives in Paris among people who still take love to be an invention of the eighteenth century, and who is faced every day with the horrors of the French radio and television network, an institution which inspires Oldenbourg with her one understatement when she writes that "the most powerful instrument invented by man for the diffusion of news and culture is almost invariably placed in somewhat mediocre hands". Yet they would not accept that if they could look back on a childhood in which they had been "a robust, dynamic child, good at games, whose friends would fight for the honour of playing with me."

Between 1972-1982 Alice Schwarzer conducted a series of interviews with Simone de Beauvoir, now collected in *Simone de Beauvoir Today* (120pp. £6.95. Chatto and Windus, 0 7011 2784 8). Jean-Paul Sartre participated in one of the interviews.

## A note of loneliness

David Matthews

PAUL GRIFFITHS  
Bartók  
224pp. Dent. £10.95.  
0460 03182 1

On the cover of Paul Griffiths's new Master Musicians study, the face of the young Bartók stares out at us: sensitive, expressionistic portrait by Robert Berény. It is the owl-like eyes that arrest: watchful but aloof, they scan the world with a wary intelligence. Photographs confirm the impression of a deeply introspective man, detached from those around him, carefully guarding his privacy. In his preface to the collected Bartók letters, Michael Tippett writes of his only encounter with the composer, at a concert just before the war: "our eyes accidentally met as I watched him from among the seats. I remember the sense of being for a second the object of an acute spiritual vision, which seemed to look at once right inside me from right inside himself." Tippett goes on to quote from a letter written at the age of twenty-four which seems to give the key to Bartók's personality: "there are times when I suddenly become aware of the fact that I am absolutely alone. And I prophesy, I have a foreknowledge, that this spiritual loneliness is to be my destiny."

Bartók here is writing to his mother from Paris. He continues: "I look about me in search of the ideal companion, and yet I am fully aware that it is a vain quest. Even if I should ever succeed in finding someone, I am sure that I would soon be disappointed." The obvious comment is that anyone who writes like this to his mother is bound to be disappointed. A few

years later Bartók made a decisive rejection of the women who had come closest to his ideal—the violinist Stefi Geyer, for whom he wrote his First Violin Concerto (significantly the first of the *Two Portraits* of 1911, identical to the first movement of the concerto, is called "One Ideal"). In one of his long letters to her he quotes some bars of music and marks a passage "your Leitmotiv"; this Stefi theme pervades the concerto and appears in a number of subsequent works. The First String Quartet, composed between 1907 and 1909, begins, as Griffiths notes, with an anguished version of the Stefi theme, in a musical language similar to Schoenberg's near-contemporary First Quartet; but the last movement both rhythmically and melodically is indebted to the folksongs that Bartók had been collecting since 1904. Griffiths draws a valid parallel between Bartók's rejection of Stefi and his sudden marriage in 1909 to the teenage Márta Ziegler, one of his students, and his attempt at announcing a Central European romantic style in favour of the unsullied values of his native folk-music. Musically at least, Bartók made the right choice: the overripe chromatic harmony of the early works is, to my ear, oppressive; while the open-air feel of the first folk-influenced music is immediately refreshing.

Folk-song, with its melodies based on modes rather than major-minor scales and its irregular rhythms, showed Bartók a way forward; it gave him a musical ideal to pursue, which it took him the rest of his life to reach. For Bartók's late-romantic skin was not to be lightly sloughed off. Griffiths points out that in the second of the *Two Portraits*, "One Grotesque", Stefi's theme is cruelly distorted, and comments: "Stafi had stirred him both to passionate ardour and to its common corollary of

violent destructiveness. Feelings so intense were not to be forgotten." Just so: of the big dramatic works of the next ten years, *Bluebeard's Castle* is full of passionate ardour, though it is in the end totally pessimistic about the possibility of a relationship between the sexes (Bartók dedicated it to his wife!); while *The Miraculous Mandarin* is equally bleak on the same topic and its music is as violent as *The Rite of Spring*. The strain of violence in Bartók's music was always liable to burst out, even in a late work like the Concerto for Orchestra, which otherwise represents the purest sublimation of his folk style. In Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta, the introspection of the opening fugue and the violent eruptions of the slow movement are counterbalanced by the exuberant gaiety of the folk-like fast movements. It is the First Quartet's drama again, but here the emotions are more under control.

## Command performer

Diana Poulton

ISTVÁN HOMOLYA  
Valentine Bakfark: Lutenist from Transylvania  
Translated by Gyula Gulyás  
245pp. Budapest: Corvina, distributed by Collet's. £7.50.  
96313 1802 8

Valentine Bakfark was a composer of lute music whose works became known, during his lifetime, throughout a great part of continental Europe. From the late nineteenth century onwards much has been written about him, mainly by musicologists from central Europe. He has received less attention in England and America. This translation into English of István Homolya's full-length study is, therefore, particularly welcome.

Born in Transylvania in 1506 or 1507, according to Homolya, he always considered himself to be of Hungarian nationality. At an early age he showed great musical promise and received his musical training at the court of János Zápolyai, King of Hungary. Eventually he was raised to the nobility and was granted a coat of arms in recognition of his service. Subsequently he served at the court of the King of Poland and then, in 1566, he was appointed lutenist to the Emperor Maximilian at Vienna. In 1569, however, he was arrested in the belief that he had taken part in a conspiracy against his royal master. Nothing was proved against him and within a short time he was released. He left the service of the Emperor and returned to Transylvania where he entered the service of Prince John Sigismund, the son of his original employer. On the death of the prince he applied for leave of absence and joined his family who had preceded him to Italy. He spent the rest of his life there as an independent teacher and died of plague on August 22, 1576.

Homolya's analysis of Bakfark's music is extremely perceptive. He divides his musical output into two periods—that of his first publication, *Intabulatura Valentini Bakfarki Transilvani Coronesis*: Liber Primus, printed in Lyons with the date 1553, now generally referred to as the Lyons Book, which he classifies as his French

period, and that of his second publication, *Valentini Greffii Bakfarki Pannonii, Hungariorum Musicarum in Usum Testudinis Faciarum*, Tomus Primus, printed in Cracow in 1565, now generally referred to as the Cracow Lute Book, which he classifies as his Polish period. During these years Bakfark's style evolved into particularly personal way both in the type of embellishment used and in the increasing use of "peculiar, unusual harmonies and harsh, dissonant concurrences".

Unfortunately, however, some of Homolya's statements seem to suggest that he is not fully aware of work that has been done in other parts of Europe. In the introduction he writes of the interest in Bakfark's work prior to 1938 when, he suggests, "interest slackened". He goes on to say that his work revived in popularity only in the 1970s and that "renewed interest in sixteenth-century lute music awakened in a number of countries at about the same time". Of course publications lessened during the Second World War but on the declaration of peace work was soon renewed and, leading up to the Colloque on "Le Luth et sa Musique" held at Neuilly-sur-Seine in 1957 and the years following, there was a particularly fruitful period with the publication of sixteenth-century lute music and extensive research both in Europe and America.

Homolya also seems to lack a knowledge of Spanish and English music of the sixteenth century. In writing of the divisions of music into secular and sacred, and popular and art music, he suggests that during the sixteenth century "there was hardly any communication between them". In Spain, from the beginning of the century onwards, a large proportion of composed music was based on the *romances* and their tunes, both of which had been passed down for generations. In England the last quarter of the sixteenth century saw the beginning of a period in which, with the countless settings of ballad tunes by all the most eminent composers of instrumental music, popular and art music were never more closely linked.

Space does not permit discussion of some smaller factual errors; it is sad to have to record these shortcomings when, as long as he confines himself to Bakfark's life and works, Homolya's book is full of interest.

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# Remainders

## Eric Korn

Further sensations are expected next week at York Assizes when the extraordinary York Minister Arson Case resumes.

On the first day of the trial the defendant, GOD, described as a company director of no fixed address, refused to plead or answer questions about his age and occupation. There was a move by the Crown to have Him declared Mute of Malice, but the defence introduced substantial documentary evidence that the Prisoner's muteness and deafness to pleas were a genuine disability of long standing.

*Judge Dredd:* Is there any way of communicating with the Accused?

*Counsel:* He does sometimes vouchsafe a sign, my Lord.

The question next arose whether the accused was a Person who could properly be charged.

*Judge Dredd:* I see no great difficulty here. It seems to be common ground that Prisoner is one Person at least, and the case may proceed on that basis. If He were several Persons forming a Unity, He could then be charged as a corporate body, according to the precedent of *Regina vs Vale of Pewsey Light Railway*. The alternative hypothesis of several Persons and Several Substances need not be considered as Crown, wisely in my opinion, has decided not to proceed with the Conspiracy charges.

The Attorney-General, leading for the Crown, urged that no individual, no matter how highly placed, could be allowed to take the law into His own hands, or attempt to right grievances by intimidation. The closure of churches which were no longer economic or even beneficial was bound to cause some hardship, and disrupt some historic communities; none the less it was essential if the Church was to survive in competition with more modern sources of Power. He would introduce documents, unquestionably of the Accused's authorship, that showed a long-standing plan

of achieving damnation by violent means if persuasion failed, and that His lip-service to democratic forms concealed an almost megalomaniac desire for the exercise of tyrannical power. Witnesses would declare that the fire had been started by a single lightning bolt from a clear sky, and ballistic and meteorological expert witnesses would testify that this was out of the natural order of events. He would show that the accused, fancying himself slighted by the Archbishop of York, one of whose business associates had differed from him over various matters of Church policy, and perhaps under the confused impression that the Archbishop actually resided in the Minster, had become enraged and performed this senseless act of vandalism.

Lord Goodman, opening for the defence, pleaded in the first instance that the Minster belonged to the Defendant, who was entitled to do as He pleased with it. It was commonly referred to as the House of God.

*Judge Dredd:* Rather a literal interpretation, surely. Does your client also claim ownership of Lord's Cricket Ground? (*Sycophantic chuckles.*)

Counsel went on to point out that the fire was in fact a benevolent act, as popular sympathy had been raised to the highest pitch, and huge funds had been contributed, while the cost of the damage was entirely covered by the insurance. It was true that his Client sometimes moved in mysterious ways, but eccentricity was an Englishman's privilege. He would also be offering the alternative plea in mitigation that his Client had repented of His anger, and had fought (with the co-operation of the local Fire Services) to reduce the extent of the conflagration.

A sensational development took place on the fourth day of the trial when Accused took the witness box. After notional discussions about which Testament should be used to administer the oath, Defendant chose to affirm, and addressed the Court in a still, small

voice. He spoke of intolerable provocation, saying that His authority and *bona fides* had been called in question, his war record disputed, and objectionable insinuations made about His family relationships. He asked permission to write the words complained of. This was granted and the Court rose.

Meanwhile the city is in uproar. "SUPPORT THE YORKSHIRE MINSTER" and "SALVE NUMEN" badges are everywhere; food parcels and priestly comforts arrive by every train. The Jonathan Martin Society is meeting in Permanent Extraordinary Session. Prayer Stations throughout Yorkshire are being blacked by clerical pickets, and the Establishment's claim that stocks of Divine Grace are sufficient to last through the winter are lacking increasingly hollow.

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We all snatch at distinction wherever we can find it, and the other day I was gently preening myself with the thought that I was perhaps the only person in my corner of London engaged on the crossword (16 Across: Rectal Injection, 5 letters) in the Winter 1929 number of the *Bloodless Phlebotomist*, a magazine published by the Denver Chemical Manufacturing Company (of New York, curiously) in the interests of spreading about the globe (Drogueria "Standard", 2 Strada Zorilor, Bucharest; Muller and Phipps [Malaya] Ltd, 26 Gang Passer Baroe, Batavia) the Good News about Antiphlogistine. Antiphlogistine was a sort of dove-grey therapeutic artificial mud, with which sufferers from divers ills were comprehensively poulticed, and had little to do with Phlogiston, except that today both are equally unfashionable (nothing is so powerless as an idea whose time has gone), except again that while Phlogiston never did exist, never rising above the rank of postulant postulate or apprentice hypothesis, Antiphlogistine demonstrably did and I still bear the scar of an over-zealous dose. (It looked, come to think of it, rather the way I've always imagined hyle, the primal matter of the Aristotelians; a universe of medicated clays no harder to imagine than a universe of quarks.) "Bloodless Phlebotomist", I suppose, is a good thing to be, even if it does sound like a rather refined term of Parliamentary abuse.

My interest in the crossword, an early example of the form, petered out when I realized I was ineligible for the prize of a clinical thermometer, but I noted with relish - we snatch, as I said, at whatever distinction we can - that 19 down BIN was for surely the only time in history, clues as "Bismuth Subnitrate (abbrev), 3 letters".

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Es ou sav la ni pll moun en Karmyb-In ka palé Kwéyol passé Anglé? You probably don't say any more than I did until recently.

Whenever I get feeling elderly, whenever there is a damp November in my soul, as Melville says, I rejuvenate myself by learning a new language, whaling voyages being a little harder to come by than they used to be.

Or rather, by starting a new language, because I never get beyond Lesson V ("More about Interrogative Pronouns"), or on exceptional days, Exercise VII ("Preterites in *It*. The use of the honorific *pung*"). Often I overmatch myself completely; like trying to study some language just recorded by MIT graduates from its last living speaker, a centenarian hammock-weaver from Yucatan; but studying a language from a transformational grammar is like trying to get Hellenic local colour from a study of Athenian municipal budget proposals, or amorously embracing a skeleton.

This year's language was new indeed, scarcely recognized as proper language by those who speak it, only sporadically written down, its orthography only agreed in 1981. This is Kwéyol or Patwa (the spelling "patola" marks you as a neo-colonialist), the current speech of the ex-British Colonias of St Lucia and Dominica, and the French Overseas Départements of Martinique and Guadeloupe. Throw in their far more numerous neighbours in Haiti, and you have some six million speakers, more than Norwegian or Danish or Periclean Greek; more people than speak English in the West

Indies (see opening sentence). The ambitious include Louisiana Cajun, the speech of Cayenne and even of Mauritius. And there are thousands of speakers in Twer Hamlets, London, which is why the local authority is backing the Patwa Project, not designed primarily for frivolous linguistic kibitzers like myself, but for English-speaking children who want to know what their parents are saying, for parents who are perhaps only semi-literate because they haven't been able to make the double leap from speaking one language to writing another, for writers and poets who want to use the language that their history has shaped.

Patwa's vocabulary is French, its structure, perhaps - West African: it has, obviously, diverged in the officially Anglophone and the officially Francophone islands. And I'm having a wonderful time as the native speakers struggle with their memories and the systematizers try to create order, while I battle through reports of maritime disasters ("Twiligho péché") in bilingual "Balata" and bold tongue when Dominicans and St Lucians disagree.

Is this all a left-wing plot, under the banner of multiculturalism, to undermine the English language and English notions of propriety? Yes, if French is a plot to subvert Latin, and English, a creole dialect if there ever was one, simply ungrammatical Anglo-Saxon contaminated with a lot of exotic slang. At first sight Patwa may look like abraded French, but the things are not what they seem at first sight, as we Patwans say, "dlo mouches pa li" (cloudy water isn't milk).

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If I can't find chiming titles (*The Oratory Cites* by Zane "Utah" Ritter) I'll settle for any old title, which is why I returned triumphantly home recent foray with nothing but *Cuthe's Adieu to the Ruptured* (Chas Cluthe and Sons of Bloomfield, NJ, 71st edn), *The Report of the First Three Years of the Canadian National Egg-Laying Contests*, and *Octogenarian Testicles* (with one hundred and thirteen portraits) (London, National Temperance League, 1897). The contents of these volumes are adumbrated with some precision in the files *Cuthe's Advice to the Ruptured* is full of advice ("Don't Let Rupture Get the Best of You", "Costs More to Do Without It Than to Get It", "How to Order"); *Canadian Egg-Laying Contests* is full of ovidian data (Come on, New Brunswick, Lay up, Lay up, and Lay the Gunna); while *Octogenarian Testicles* (with one hundred and thirteen portraits) does indeed depict the physiognomies of five score, a dozen and a half of smiling dry oldsters, forty of whom were wheeled, hoisted or otherwise assembled in the Town Hall of St Martin-in-the-Fields in May 1896, where each one tottered to the rostrum to say how well he or she felt, and how much worse he or she would have felt if liquor had been permitted to pass the lip. "I wish the young persons here would look at me" said Benjamin Lucraft (88) of London; there were no more headaches for the Reverend Isaac and Mrs Dorey (160) who had signed the pledge sixty-three years earlier; Geo Propertius of North Petherton was still ailing and tilting an ex-Mayor of Weymouth walked "with head erect and step elastic"; "I am the oldest book-seller in Scotland", proclaimed Mr James Keith of Dingwall. There too were letters from Mr Charles Absolon, the famous "second crackle"; Mr Denis Healy who had signed the pledge fifty-nine years earlier in Father Mole's parlour in Cork; and still more affecting testimony: "My father was a drunkard, but I have refused the urgent appeals to induce me to use the vile stuff, thank God." My sister's memory is falling but news of temperance progress still cheers her; while Mr J. S. White is moved to quote Shakespeare at length on the evils of booze because he describes them "so tritely and so vividly". Well, they are a muddy and hale and wholesome lot, I grant, and a good time was had by all, perhaps too good a time, for when the book was published in the spring of 1897 some 10 per cent of the population had deceased. Can some scholarly hell be expected from a sample of octogenarian poets, and what are my chances of becoming the next best bookseller in Dingwall?

# Letters

## Editing Yeats

Sir, - Richard J. Finneran (Letters, August 3) lists what he calls six facts about Mrs W. B. Yeats and then goes on: "Given this record, one cannot simply assume that she was following Yeats's wishes in ordering the 1949 *Poems*. The documentary evidence suggests otherwise." Since Mrs Yeats is dead, and Thomas Mark also, and since I believe Professor Finneran did not ever meet either of them, I should like to pay tribute to both, and to defend their reputations. I do so from personal knowledge. Mrs Yeats was my friend from 1943 to her death, and I met her frequently in the course of writing my *Yeats: Man and poet* (1949; 1962) and preparing my *Commentary on the Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats* (1968). With both, obviously, I discussed the ordering of Yeats's poems and the textual problems involved in editing his work.

Mrs Yeats was most precise and careful, as was Thomas Mark (to whose judgment, particularly in punctuation, Yeats - and Hardy - constantly and happily deferred). Mrs Yeats generally wrote to A. P. Watt and Macmillan on Yeats's behalf (her hand was easier to read than Yeats's, her typewriting even more so), but always after he and she had fully discussed what would be said to agent and publisher - with both of whom Yeats was in agreement, particularly about the differing chronological and non-chronological ordering of the *De Luxe* edition, on the one hand, and the *Collected Poems* and the proposed Scribner edition, on the other.

Finneran is so determined to follow the non-chronological order of the *Collected Poems* that he seems to avoid not only the obvious documentary evidence (what of the nine pages alluded to in the introduction to my *New Commentary*, of which pages I understand he now has a copy?) but the non-documentary evidence of Mrs Yeats's and Mark's views, not to mention Lord Stockton's (Harold Macmillan's) memories. I can assure Finneran that Mrs Yeats knew that Yeats wanted two different arrangements.

Now to his six points about Mrs Yeats. (1) The extra material for the *De Luxe* edition was suggested after Yeats's death, which of course changed everything. A posthumous extra volume was to be issued later than the WB-*approved* *De Luxe* volumes, but conforming to their format (can we not assume that discussion took place between husband and wife? It did, though it was not "documented" for scholars working forty-five years later). (2) To have a doubt about what to do with "Three Songs to the Same Tune" seems entirely reasonable. (3) Mrs Yeats did accept Thomas Mark's suggestion about the placing of "Under Ben Bulbin", and that was a mistake. It arose because Mark (understandably, perhaps, in view of Yeats's often-expressed faith in his editorial judgment) continued to edit Yeats after his death in the way that he edited him when he was alive. He suggested placing "Under Ben Bulbin" at the end to Mrs Yeats as he would have to Yeats. But Mrs Yeats later agreed with the late Professor Curtis Bradford's arguments about the order of *Last Poems*. One can make mistakes; not all people admit them. (4) Again, Mrs Yeats's doubt about "The Choice" seems reasonable - and it is in any case a minor point. (5) Her reported views about the arrangement of *Poems* (1949) dealt probably with the "Narrative and Dramatic" section's poems. She told me, for instance, that WB's desire for a chronological arrangement of them was embodied in the *Poems* (1949). To say "she can hardly have forgotten" about the order of *Last Poems* is to assume too much from conversations taken out of context. Thomas Mark, also, was happy that Yeats's poems were being made available in both the *Collected Poems* order (he had, after all, originally suggested it) and in that of *Poems* (1949) which he, too, knew Yeats wanted in chronological order in that volume.

Professor Finneran's remarks seem to arise from reluctance to trust the testimony of the spoken word (that is, what he would call non-documentary evidence) as well as a failure to appreciate the intellectual integrity of Mrs Yeats, whose preservation of her husband's papers was matched by her constant desire to carry out his wishes about his work and its preservation (both) to underline the point

chronological and non-chronological).

I write thus because there are now fewer people alive who had the privilege of working with Mrs Yeats's help and realizing her immense knowledge of and scrupulous care for Yeats's writings. Incidentally, Professor Fitzgerald's letter (July 20) producing "documentary" evidence about the identity of the three women in the poem "Friendship" merely corroborated, welcome, the non-documentary evidence underlying my identification, that is, conversations with Maud Gonne and Mrs Yeats.

A. NORMAN JEFFARES,  
University of Stirling.

Sir, - It is unfortunate that Richard J. Finneran (Letters, August 3) writes at a distance - in every sense - from the Macmillan Archive. I therefore refer your readers back to my review (June 29) which requires a small correction. I have written "New Poems" twice for "A Full Moon in March", when discussing the problem Mrs Yeats faced with the rewritten "Three Songs to the Same Tune". With that correction, for which I am grateful to Finneran, my case stands. I apologize for the slip.

What is remarkable about his letter is that Finneran does not acknowledge the existence of certain documents in the Yeats papers at Dalkey. He overlooked them when preparing his edition, but he has seen copies of them now and has informed me so. Cited by Jeffares in his *New Commentary*, and referred to in my review, these are lists of contents for the volumes of the Edition de Luxe (EDL) prepared by Macmillan and annotated by Yeats and his wife between the autumn of 1936 and the middle of June 1937. Mrs Yeats sent the revised lists to A. P. Watt, Yeats's agent, on June 11 and 14 in response to a letter from Harold Macmillan calling for new copy for the EDL's volume of poems.

These lists show that the Yeates and Macmillan were updating the 470 pages of page proofs of the poems, arranged in chronological order. They were doing so in the light of the contents of the *Collected Poems* (1933) (CP) and Yeats's new work, the CP ordering, with its subdivisions into "Lyrical" and "Narrative and Dramatic" sections, was at the same time being consigned to Scribner for their Dublin Edition following the advice of Macmillan and Watt. The renewed activity on the EDL was undertaken so that production of it could be expedited, when the time came to issue it, after the publication of Scribner's venture.

Finneran's letter has two main arguments: neither is new. He queries Mrs Yeats's stewardship over the arrangement of Yeats's texts, and he asserts that Yeats (rather than his wife) preferred the CP arrangement to that of the EDL. These claims are disproved by the documents Finneran declines to mention, for they show that Yeats was simultaneously preparing his work in the two different arrangements for the two projects in mid-1937, exactly in accord with the advice of his agent and his publisher, reserving the chronological arrangement for the EDL as one of its "special features".

Finneran therefore suggests a Gothic situation - Yeats trying to get his poems out in the CP format while his wife tried to subvert his wishes, succeeding apparently ten years after his death with the 1949 "Definitive Edition". Home life for the Yeates would have been awkward under these circumstances: fortunately these lists survive to demonstrate that such was not the case.

The emended lists of June 1937 show that Yeats also preferred a chronological order for his plays - "Print them chronologically", he replied to Thomas Mark who had queried the order of *Wheels and Butterflies* (or "More Plays for Dancers" as he wanted them entitled). The lists show too that the poem from *A Full Moon in March* and after - "All new poems" - were to be entitled "Poems 1933-1937". Nothing suggests that Mrs Yeats in preparing these lists was doing otherwise than executing Yeats's wishes.

Other volumes of the EDL, so it was natural for Yeats to ask them to hold up this process until he had seen Scribner proof, and entirely in line with the agreed procedure whereby the EDL would absorb any new materials from the Scribner edition.

Another list, prepared later and bearing all

the marks of being associated with the Scribner project, lists the poems in CP format and arranges the new material to follow page 315 of the CP, the last page of the "Lyrical" section. What Yeats had thought in November 1936 were virtually identical and almost simultaneous productions on each side of the Atlantic had become, as a result of Harold Macmillan's letter of November 14, 1936, very divergent enterprises. Yeats was not going to disagree with his agent and publisher for a one-off venture to be sold house-to-house by Scribner, who were not even his usual American publishers. Of course, had he chosen to ignore that advice, Macmillan would not have stood in his way. But he didn't: "Macmillan's interest and mine should not clash", as he wrote to Watt on another occasion in July 1937.

It is add that Finneran has never sought to interview Harold Macmillan (now Lord Stockton), the one surviving party to these arrangements, whose excellent memory is entirely confirmed by the surviving papers.

As for the Scribner materials now in Texas, I have indeed seen copies of the relevant documents and I refer readers back again to my review. The arguments there can readily be expanded, but not within the compass of these columns. I have developed them, and also answered the minor matters he raises, in a letter to Professor Finneran, copies of which I will gladly make available to interested parties. However, Finneran's long paragraph about the Scribner project is quite beside the point: no one doubts that Scribner initially arranged their edition "following Yeats's instructions". After his death it was reordered neither completely nor successfully back into chronological order.

At the same time, it seems worth pointing out here that had Finneran not been silent on the 1937 lists, he could not have asked whether Yeats would have allowed Macmillan "to print his poems in a different arrangement" after the publication of the Scribner edition (proposed for the spring of 1938). The question, though hypothetical, is not without interest. In its long history the EDL had evolved into a memorial and canonical project, and Yeats, according to Mrs Yeats, "always said" that Macmillan "would only bring it out after his death". At that moment, Harold Macmillan immediately referred to it as a "definitive and complete" edition - something it could never have been in Yeats's lifetime. It commands our respect precisely because Yeats had come to think of it as the posthumous arrangement of his work. Yet had it come out in 1937 or 1938 as a seven-volume set, he would have been delighted to prepare it - "Months of rewriting. What happiness!", as he had said when it had been first proposed, in 1930.

Finneran asks how I "know" that Yeats, his wife, his publisher, his agent and Thomas Mark never thought of extending the arrangement of CP to the EDL. The Macmillan Archive is scattered, but it is remarkably complete, given that letters survive in copy form and in quotation inside other letters. (eg. from Yeats's agent). With a little patience, one can match one page of a letter in the British Library with its missing page in an apple-barn in Birch Grove, but there is no letter in the entire Archive which reveals any change of plan for the chronological arrangement of Yeats's poems. From the inception of the EDL project until his death in 1939.

Finneran apparently sees some conflict of interest between my critique of his edition and my commitment to two volumes in the *Collected Edition* of which he is a general editor. I regret that he seeks thus to discourage informed discussion of scholarly issues rather than engage in open debate. I very much hope that he will now arrange the conference of editors which, it has been felt, is necessary for discussion of the scope, purpose and principles of the *Collected Edition*. The need has become pressing since the publication of his edition. I hope also that he will publish a full collation of his text against the 1949 text so that readers can begin to assess the problems his edition has presented.

Professor Fitzgerald's valuable letter (July 20) I have replied to privately. She gestures to important new evidence about the drafting of "Friends" but I, like her, am hampered in the

discussion of these unpublished materials, which are significantly different from the published version and yet do not remove the difficulties of assigning lines 4-9 of the poem to Olivia Shakespeare.

WARWICK GOULD,  
Royal Holloway College, University of London,  
Egham, Surrey.

## Editing 'Ulysses'

Sir, - The extreme difficulty of achieving an accurate text of James Joyce's *Ulysses* is admirably illustrated by Hugh Kenner's review of the new critical edition of this novel recently prepared by Hans Walter Gabler and others (July 13).

Kenner cites, as an important restoration to the text, the passage (p 419 of the new edition) identifying the "word known to all men" but only inferred by Joyce's readers far six decades. Thinking of this word "love", Stephen Dedalus muses "Amor vero aliud aliquid bonum vult unde et ea quae concupiscuntur . . .". This Latin passage has emerged from Kenner's typewriter or from the TLS typographer by Hans Walter Gabler and others (July 13).

Even Joyce could err: *Amor vero aliud aliquid bonum vult unde et ea quae concupiscuntur*.

RUTH BAUERLE,  
Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware, Ohio 43015

## Wartime Civil Liberties

Sir, - H. G. Koenigsberger (Letters, July 27) complains of my use of the phrase "bitter-sweet story" in relation to the internment of enemy aliens during the Second World War. It is gallant of him to leap to the defence of a book which he confesses he has not read. If he would look at the second book dealt with in my joint review (Miriam Kochan's admirable *British Internees in the Second World War*), he would find that the phrase is fully justified by the evidence. A few random quotations from former internees quoted by Mrs Kochan: "It was marvellous . . . absolutely marvellous. It was a most friendly atmosphere. I could have cried. Where in the world would they treat an enemy alien like that?" (Dr Mac Goldsmith describing his hearing before a tribunal headed by Sir Norman Birkett). "We played golf every day, I wouldn't have missed it for anything!" (an anonymous internee). "It could have been a lovely holiday except that France had fallen and the news was terrible . . . There were roll-calls every evening but it was very pleasant . . . One felt really at home there" (Dr Moses Aberbach). "My years of internment constituted a period of uninterrupted good fortune" (Dr Klaus Loewald). "It goes without saying that I never felt any resentment about the few months I spent in internment" (Eugen Glueckauf FRSS). "I hold no resentment" ("Dr H").

So much for the sweetness. Of the bitterness (by no means unjustified) Koenigsberger himself gives evidence. But in the light of the above (to which could be added a lot more in a similar vein) I fear it is he who stretches the point a little when he says that "everyone resented it bitterly".

BERNARD WASSERSTEIN,  
Department of History, Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts 02254.

## Bats as Souvenirs

Sir, - I once had an elastically propelled black bat like that mentioned at the end of Timothy d'Arch Smith's review (July 27) of Richard Dooly's *Brain Sucker: A bibliography of first editions*. It was enclosed in a folded card bearing the following lines, which no doubt fixed it in my memory:

I am Tutankhamun a Bat.  
No doubt you wonder what I'm at -  
Right out of his tomb in Egypt I flew.  
And if you're feeling rather blue  
Just hand me, wound up, to a friend or two.

This was bought by my parents at the Weimley Exhibition in 1924, one of many examples of the effect on taste of the opening of the Tomb in November 1922, shortly before the Exhibition was designed.

Presumably the bats so appropriately enclosed in the souvenir edition of *Dracula's Guest* in 1927 were left over from the exhibition - unless they have an even earlier origin.

JEAN GOLT,  
37 Ruwan Road, Brack Green, London W6.

John 1:1-10

## MRS PAT

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THE BODLEY HEAD



# COMMENTARY

## Questions of the avant-garde

Marc Jordan

Le arti a Vienna dalla Secessione alla Cndula dell' Impero Asburgico Palazzo Grassi, Venice, until September 16

1984 is not a vintage year for contemporary art at the Venice Biennale, where this enormous and comprehensive exhibition at Palazzo Grassi, devoted to the painting, architecture and applied arts of the Viennese avant-garde around 1900, is proving a strong counter-attraction to the strident manifestations of anti-modernism in the Giardini Pubblici.

To step from the clear white light of the Grand Canal into the central courtyard of Palazzo Grassi is to be immediately and inconspicuously confronted with the darker world of teutonic mysticism. Dominating the corille is a replica of Gustav Klimt's most important surviving monumental painting, the "Beethoven Frieze" of 1902, an ambitious paraphrase of Schiller's "Ode to Joy". In Klimt's knowing post-Freudian version of the progress of mankind from desire to fulfilment the climactic moment comes on the strophe "Diesen Kuss der ganzen Welt" with the deployment on a heroic scale of his familiar motif, the embracing couple.

This brilliant work, by far the most arresting image in the show, despite being a reproduction, adumbrates much that is to be seen in the crowded main exhibition rooms of the pinno noble. Its stylistic eclecticism, bizarre combinations of the naturalistic and the hierotic, of fine art and applied art traditions, are features common to the lavish display of pictures by Klimt himself, to the early portraits of Egon Schiele and to the decorative work of Kolo Moser, co-founder of the Wiener Werkstatte which manufactured much of the finest of the silver, glass and ceramics represented here.

It is Klimt who emerges as artistically the most influential member of the Secession, it is the architect Otto Wagner, nearly a generation older, who is widely credited with creating the progressive atmosphere in which the Viennese avant-garde could flourish. Yet his actual achievement begs the whole question of the nature of the Modernist revolt in Vienna. Wagner, like Klimt, in spite of his alienation from the academic establishment, claimed the right to make gestures in the grand manner. And though like Klimt he suffered a number of

humiliating frustrations he largely succeeded in this ambition through the generosity of public as well as private patrons. He was the designer of Vienna's metro system, an intriguing combination of architect's and engineer's work, of the complex domed Church "am Steinhof", and of the striking Post Office Savings Bank, one of the first buildings to make extensive use of aluminium in its construction, all of which are on view in the flattering form of watercolour perspectives by an anonymous draftsman in the Wagner entourage.

Innovations in construction and the re-casting of ornament in *Jugendstil* forms left the essentially classical core of Wagner's architecture untouched, however. This reluctance to jettison the accumulation of traditional rhetoric was perceived as a limiting factor in the development of a truly modern architecture by the young designer Adolf Loos, a seminal figure and the Secession's sharpest critic. In his own pared-down buildings, of which the "Haus am Michaelerplatz" is the most notable, and in his satirical essay "Ornament and Crime", he prepared the way for what was to become the new orthodoxy of the Bauhaus and Le Corbusier.

Loos, whose major contribution to the development of the Modernist aesthetic was literary and critical, can hardly be done justice in an exhibition of this kind. But his protégé Kokoschka, to whose penetrating and exorcised vision Klimt's magniloquence must have seemed as irrelevant as Wagner's domes and pylons did to Loos, is fully represented by a series of portraits and figure studies in which he seems to have flayed his models in an attempt to reach to their essence. And there can be little doubt after this show that it was Kokoschka's urgent Expressionist example that shaped the later work of Schiele in which he retreats from the universal mythology of Klimt's gilded and bejewelled art into a world of private sexual obsession represented through angular, jutting, outluc and muddled, bloody colours.

This exhibition is the largest and most beguiling we are likely to see on its subject, making the Royal Academy's 1971 Secession show and last year's Edinburgh Festival *Vienim 1900* look small fry indeed. It seems no accident that the organizers of the Biennale should have chosen to examine in such detail one of the most contradictory founts of Modernism at exactly the moment when the received orthodoxies of the avant-garde are being most searchingly scrutinized.

## Affairs of ceremony and state

Robin Cormack

The Treasury of San Marco, Venice British Museum, until September 2

At first sight this exhibition appears to be yet another collection of gold objects displayed under spotlights in darkened rooms; or perhaps just one small addition to a series of Venice exhibitions, justified by the need to raise money to give a safe and permanent home to the objects when they return to that city. But it soon becomes clear that the collection could offer more insights to the visitor about Venetian attitudes and beliefs than has any of the other selections of material which have been brought to London.

The objects are predominantly chalices, devotional icons and reliquaries. The main pieces came to Venice from the palaces and churches of medieval Constantinople, and represent some of the major commissions of Byzantine art. Other significant objects came from Islamic court circles, including that of Fatimid Cairo, or were made or embellished in Venice itself. The Republic of Venice made positive efforts to acquire such rich pieces, either through looting or through business and banking negotiations or even as gifts. The Treasury of the church of San Marco, where they were kept, acted as a state repository for the Doge.

The exhibition is accompanied by a small illustrated pamphlet, compiled by David Buckton of the Museum, which summarizes the history of the Treasury and gives information about selected objects. Alternatively, there is a heavy and wordy catalogue with excellent colour photographs of all the objects (337pp. Milan: Olivetti, £15). The pamphlet is ideal as an introduction to the collection, and in its selection of objects to give a focus to the material. The catalogue is far less satisfying. As a record of the exhibition it is clearly very valuable but it typifies a pattern of scholarly reference books, sold at exhibitions, which offer the general visitor mystification rather than help, and which disappoint the specialist by relying more on previous literature than on new study of the objects. For example, the large reliquary "throne" is, as in previous writings, described as made from obalaster, perhaps in the sixth century in Alexandria. The excellent lighting of this exhibition shows that it is in fact made from Proconnesian marble from the quarries of

the Marmara (and so more likely to come from nearby Constantinople). The silver gilt minichurch which features on the poster for the exhibition is also the subject of little new study in the catalogue, where it is once again described as a lamp or perfume burner, probably from South Italy. One looks for an entry which offers more suggestions to explain its oddities, as that it might be a vessel to carry the bread of the eucharist or that it might come from Russia, and should be compared with the twelfth-century metalwork of Novgorod.

The chief value of the exhibition is not brought out by the introverted art-historical language of the catalogue. It should be emphasized that these actual objects had a major ceremonial function in the promotion of official attitudes in Venice. A number of recent historical studies have described and interpreted the rituals and processions in which such material objects were used. Even more striking is the way their functions and even meanings have changed in the course of time. These objects show not only what tradition can mean in the history of art, but also how small groups of rich and powerful people can support their position in a society. A number of the pieces were adapted over time. A polychrome sardonyx vessel from Classical Antiquity appears to have been kept somewhere in Byzantium for centuries, perhaps as a family heirloom, and was then converted into a chalice for the eucharist by a Byzantine emperor Romanos in the tenth century; its next use was in a major church in Constantinople. Then somehow it passed into Venetian hands, and became a new symbol of Venetian prestige, an example of the city inheriting the wealth of earlier powers. The material adaptations of these objects by their various owners, and their fragment display to enhance the position of these owners, can be traced in a typical example. One Byzantine text describes no exhibition in the Great Palace of Constantinople in the middle of the tenth century, far which the emperors assembled not only their own possessions but all the holdings in church treasuries. All was put on show inside the palace for one day, and may well have included some of the objects in the current exhibition. The purpose was to make an impression of Byzantine wealth and power on a particular group of visitors to the city — the Arab ambassadors. Have the functions of art changed much in 1984?

Duckworth have not simply reprinted previously published material, for Dworkin himself contributes a new fifty-page reply to his critics, which is a substantial addition to the corpus of his writings. The book includes a select bibliography of related writings, and provides some short biographical notes on the various contributors, but not, alas, on Dworkin himself. The controversies in legal theory with which he has been principally concerned are well covered. His writings have concentrated upon the mysteries of the judicial decision, and in the common law world in particular, disputes both as to precisely what it is judges get up to, and what they ought, according to some conception of role or value, to get up to, have a long and distinguished history. With them are associated deeper disputes as to the nature of law itself.

The opposing positions were neatly staked out as recently as 1345, on what must have been a slack day in the Court of Common Pleas. There Mr Justice Hillary expressed the view that the law was simply the will of the justices, *volunté des justices* in the legal French of the time. His colleague Stonore sharply disagreed: "Not at all. Law is reason." (*Nanyly. Ley est reason*.) Expressed with less brevity, and variously developed, this disagreement has continued ever since. In modern times the professional philosophers, as this volume makes clear, have moved in on the act.

Dworkin himself, though he has, both before and after his move to Oxford in 1969, spent a lot of time in Britain, has his roots planted firmly in the United States; there the main impetus to developing theories of the judicial process derives from the constitutional position, whatever it really is, of the Supreme Court. Academics there still live in the shadow cast over the legitimacy of the legal system by the realists, whose iconoclastic writings expressed a cynical attitude to beliefs in the objectivity of law and the notion that legal decisions express the expert and impartial working out of given principles of the law. Like the Marxists, the realists undermined the concept of the rule of law. Their successors, the exponents of critical legal studies, now entrenched even in the incongruous home of radicalism, the Harvard Law School, are today busily engaged in a process known as "trash the law" much in the spirit to which the Trobriand Islanders "rubbed the white man's cricketer", though they at least developed a new and more exciting game to play instead. This the exponents of critical legal studies have not yet done.

Dworkin breathed new life into old disputes principally by boldly reasserting theories which had come to seem not just unobjectionable but weird and challenging his audience to show dependence are the 'prevailing values' being

## How do the judges do it?

A. W. B. Simpson

MARSHALL COHEN (Editor) Ronald Dworkin and Contemporary Jurisprudence 304pp. Duckworth. £24 (paperback, £9.95). 071561813X

Since his entry into the jurisprudential lists Ronald Dworkin has adopted a polemical style of writing, directing his attacks against two principal targets — legal positivism and utilitarianism. Although in the process various other scholars have come in for attention, the principal stalking-horse has been H. L. A. Hart's *The Concept of Law*. Rather than a book, Dworkin has published numerous articles and reviews, and this has enabled him to avoid the pains of reaching even a temporary finality; his views and arguments develop as the debate continues.

The present volume reprints thirteen pieces, most of them periodical articles, which have been published since 1972 by way of response to Dworkin's work. Most come from American periodicals, some of them not easy to come by in Britain. The editorial work has been done by Marshall Cohen, a philosopher, for whom the task has clearly been a labour of love: he opens his preface with the bold assertion, "In the opinion of the editor the jurisprudential writings of Ronald Dworkin constitute the finest contribution yet made by an American writer to the philosophy of law." We are however spared any attempt to argue this claim; Cohen merely goes on to provide a clear summary of the papers.

Duckworth have not simply reprinted previously published material, for Dworkin himself contributes a new fifty-page reply to his critics, which is a substantial addition to the corpus of his writings. The book includes a select bibliography of related writings, and provides some short biographical notes on the various contributors, but not, alas, on Dworkin himself. The controversies in legal theory with which he has been principally concerned are well covered. His writings have concentrated upon the mysteries of the judicial decision, and in the common law world in particular, disputes both as to precisely what it is judges get up to, and what they ought, according to some conception of role or value, to get up to, have a long and distinguished history. With them are associated deeper disputes as to the nature of law itself.

The opposing positions were neatly staked out as recently as 1345, on what must have been a slack day in the Court of Common Pleas. There Mr Justice Hillary expressed the view that the law was simply the will of the justices, *volunté des justices* in the legal French of the time. His colleague Stonore sharply disagreed: "Not at all. Law is reason." (*Nanyly. Ley est reason*.) Expressed with less brevity, and variously developed, this disagreement has continued ever since. In modern times the professional philosophers, as this volume makes clear, have moved in on the act.

Dworkin himself, though he has, both before and after his move to Oxford in 1969, spent a lot of time in Britain, has his roots planted firmly in the United States; there the main impetus to developing theories of the judicial process derives from the constitutional position, whatever it really is, of the Supreme Court. Academics there still live in the shadow cast over the legitimacy of the legal system by the realists, whose iconoclastic writings expressed a cynical attitude to beliefs in the objectivity of law and the notion that legal decisions express the expert and impartial working out of given principles of the law. Like the Marxists, the realists undermined the concept of the rule of law. Their successors, the exponents of critical legal studies, now entrenched even in the incongruous home of radicalism, the Harvard Law School, are today busily engaged in a process known as "trash the law" much in the spirit to which the Trobriand Islanders "rubbed the white man's cricketer", though they at least developed a new and more exciting game to play instead. This the exponents of critical legal studies have not yet done.

Dworkin breathed new life into old disputes principally by boldly reasserting theories which had come to seem not just unobjectionable but weird and challenging his audience to show

where he had gone wrong. Most remarkable is his claim that there is always (or virtually always, for, typically, he hedges his bets) a right answer to every legal question, a claim which, if it could be sustained, would finally root the radicals. Like some jurisprudential Frankenstein, he even constructs a superjudge called Hercules and tries to explain how he does it: essentially by playing the game of Lady Macbeth's children with the dusty materials of the law. Such a view, presented by a less able controversialist, would have rightly been dismissed as potty; instead, at least in academia, it has had to be taken seriously, and has generated a considerable controversial literature, of which this collection is representative.

If one asks, "what's new?", I suppose the answer is that since these writings principally express conflicting attitudes to how judicial decisions ought to be reached, rather than providing information as to how they in fact are reached, and since views on the matter continue to differ, each generation of legal thinkers finds it necessary to refigure the old battles with new weapons. And the weapons here are the terms in which the arguments are presented.

The editor groups the first three pieces in a section headed "Law and Morals", unified by their concern to explain where ideas of right and wrong fit into legal decisions. E. Phillip Soper discusses the nature of those standards (other than legal rules) and those notions of purpose which seem in our legal culture to bind judges, some being in his view implicit in the very notion of judging. He goes on to discuss Dworkin's claim that in the really tricky cases Hercules will seek the right answer in entities called principles, described sweepingly by Dworkin as: "both abstract and concrete principles that provide a coherent justification for all common law precedents, and so far as these are to be justified on principle, constitutional and statutory provisions as well". It will be seen that we are, in this collection, in the jurisprudential stratosphere. Jules L. Coleman takes the essential feature of positivism to be the claim that law is everywhere conventional in nature, and attempts to present a modified theory, "positive social rule positivism", which concedes Dworkin's criticisms but rescues this central tenet. David Lyons's piece, "Moral Aspects of Positivism", argues that positivism must embody a concept of what counts as a justified judicial decision, and this, he claims, entails moral argument.

The second sub-division is headed "The Judicial Decision". It reprints Joseph Raz's well-known attack on Dworkin's theory of principles, adding a postscript not in the original, dedicated to maintaining the attack on Dworkin's shifting views. Kent Greenawald's "Policy, Rights and Judicial Decision" discusses Dworkin's assertion that judges in difficult cases ought in general to pay no attention to the furtherance of collective community goals; their job is to declare individual or group rights. He points out that Dworkin gives no convincing reasons for this programme; Dworkin replies that he is unconvinced. Donald H. Regan attacks his contribution by drawing attention to the fact that since so many writers have rejected Dworkin's views it is puzzling to explain why "views so widely rejected have received so much attention". His explanation is that Dworkin's writings are in part "distressingly obscure" and "tantalizingly incomplete", and asks out to provide an expository gloss to bring out the ideas latent in the words of the master. Much of Regan's interesting discussion is unhappily locked away in a set of very long and unattractively printed footnotes. The late John Mackie argues that Dworkin has developed a third theory of law, somewhere between positivism and natural law theory; he treats Dworkin's legal theory as essentially confused: in part a description of what in fact goes on, and in part a recommendation as to how courts ought to have behaved. Viewed as the latter Mackie puts the case for saying that the theory is a bad thing, since it could unsettle the law.

Part Three of the collection is headed: "The Objectivity of Law". A. D. Woodley presents an elaborate discussion of Dworkin's version of the "How many children has Lady Macbeth?" game. Dworkin has argued that answers to all questions lurk somewhere in the law, if only one takes the time to tease them out. We are to suppose that from the text of *Macbeth* one can show whether Banquo, more likely than not, had athlete's foot, or, if the passage of time is not to matter, would have liked hot dogs; teasing answers out of the law, it is claimed, is like that. Neil MacCormick, in a piece which introduces a welcome sense of history into the collection, argues that Dworkin is properly placed as a pre-Benthamite, but one whose theories face insuperable difficulty in that he does not wish to return to the idea that legal rationality depends upon conformity with some set of natural prescriptions. In older terms he is, like Sir Edward Coke, an "artificial reason of law" man; his notion of a constructive as opposed to a natural model has indeed some affinities with the notion of deep structure in language.

Part Four is entitled "Law and Politics" — which is, in a sense, what the whole collection is really about. We have contributions from R. Sartorius, "Dworkin on Rights and Utilitarianism", discussing briefly Dworkin's view that in law individual rights should always trump considerations of general welfare — surely a political programme. H. L. A. Hart is concerned with essentially the same topic, and argues elegantly that a theory of rights cannot be derived, as Dworkin (and Nozick) have argued, from the notions of human individuality and equality. Michael Sandel's "Liberalism and the Claims of Community: The Case for Affirmative Action" launches an effective attack on the internal inconsistencies involved in Dworkin's support of affirmative action programmes, and extracts a modest concession from Dworkin in his reply. And, finally, Judge Richard Posner's "Dworkin's Critique of Wealth Maximisation" defends his own theory of both how courts ought to decide cases, and in fact, in the common law, have decided them, from attacks by philosophically minded lawyers, using Dworkin as it were as a stalking-horse; this piece is an extract from Judge Posner's book, to which anyone seriously interested in these matters will turn. Dworkin attacks this piece as not being based upon the volume of analysis required to demonstrate, for example, the efficiency of common law, but this I fear is the pot calling the kettle black, for empirical verification is hardly Dworkin's forte.

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Given adherence to the notion of the rule of law, the operation of the judicial system is premised on an ideal of uniformity; unless differences are provided by law, the law on theft or supplementary benefits or whatever is supposed to be the same in Bangor as in Bognor Regis. An elaborate structure of institutions and beliefs buttresses this ideal. There are appeal courts, sentencing guidelines, arrangements for the disposal of lunatic, senile or criminal judges, and mechanisms to reduce the influence of deviants. Complex conventions and beliefs, including belief in the ideal of uniformity, contribute to the preservation of some degree of cohesion; systematizing legal literature, and today, computer services, also play a part in the process. Such a description could be much elaborated, as could the analysis of the conception employed within the system by professional lawyers, and by legal expositors. Now, philosophical writers on the judicial

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system do not seem to be in the least interested in the study and analysis of the system as it is, in all its rich and complex variety. Indeed they generally seem concerned only with senior appellate courts as if they alone took tricky legal decisions, and such empirical reference as is made is perfunctory, serving only, I think, to suggest but not show that there is some connection between their theories and reality. So what are they concerned with? If we take the "right answer thesis" as an example, there is no claim that this reports a belief which all those involved in judicial decision hold, though it may be held by some. It is conceivable that everyone might be persuaded that there was always a right answer; perhaps this would make the proposition true, in so far as it would then be part of the definition of a legal decision that it could be correct. More plausibly, what is being claimed is that there is always a right answer even if people do not all believe this; this sounds like the claim that in the legal world, unlike any other practical world we know of, there are always conclusive arguments in favour of particular solutions, or alternatively that although the conventions of legal argument do not always generate conclusive reasons, there is some independent test (eg. the game of Lady Macbeth's children) which is capable of demonstrating that only one solution is right. Or perhaps what is at issue is a claim that the world would be a happier place if judges proceeded on the assumption that there was a uniquely correct answer; in law, as in children's games, there is a value in playing "let's pretend".

There are perhaps other possibilities, but we need to be clearer what they are. And we are not going to be clearer unless the philosophers move from discussing each others' theories to discussing the complex institution whose nature their theories are supposed to elucidate.

## London Review of Books

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## The periodicals, 20: *The Honest Ulsterman*

Alan Jenkins

FRANK ORMSBY (Editor) *The Honest Ulsterman* No 75: May 1984 96pp. £1 quarterly from 70 Eglantine Avenue, Belfast BT9 6DY

"As you say, we're living in a bad time", Peter McDonald says in an interesting poem-sequence, "Interiors", published in the current, seventy-fifth, number of *The Honest Ulsterman*. It's certainly a bad time for Northern Ireland, and a bad time for small magazines it may be, but *HU*, published quarterly in Belfast, shows the "consistent vitality" and "engagingness of the born survivor". No 75 does not depart from the usual format or contents of the magazine in any way: a long section of new verse, by Szirtes, Longley, Raine, Muldoon, Foley, Ewart, Matthews, McCuckton, Adcock, Rumens, McCarthy, Cassidy (not the best of any of them, but not unimpressive either); this is followed by the "Business Section", given over to the third instalment of "Joe Biggar's" vigorous "reportage-novel" about class-demarcations in "Farset", a town much resembling, in its religious and political dividedness, Belfast; and some few pages of reviews.

In recent years *HU*, edited by Frank Ormsby (joined for this issue by young fellow-poet Robert Johnstone), has established itself as an unassuming but distinctly classy forum for new writing; the emphasis is definitely literary, and

is informed and informative on political issues, but these always arise out of cultural-artistic ones. It seems, to an outsider, catholic to broadly Catholic, liberal shading towards the Republican in sympathy, though firmly non-aligned. There is a good deal of extra-Irish material; No 61, for example, contained a long consideration of Gore Vidal, and the "Business Section" is regularly occupied by the entertaining (though sometimes unforgivably slapdash) "Jude the Obscure", imparting in a knockabout way his enthusiasm for Daudet, Proust or strip-cartoons in their infancy.

Much of it is classic little-magazine stuff, which might benefit from more editorial attention of copy and proof-reading stage. But it is all an unimaginably far cry from the first number in 1968, which was edited by James Simmons and announced itself as "a magazine of revolution". This amounted to some mawkish, well-meaning, schoolmasterly fighting-talk from Simmons himself ("Literature starts and finishes with men talking to men; and the most important thing for a man talking to men is to be honest"); the more embarrassing in the light of developments in Ulster in the 1970s; a more urgent, or at least more realistic, Humanist credo from one John D. Stewart; a hair-raisingly earnest interview with Roger McGough ("also sings with 'The Scaffold'"); has appeared with them on T.V., reading his own poetry without gush or gimmicks. This seems to us very important... which talks up McGough, and "people like John Lennon, Bob Dylan, Donovan" at the

"thin sophistication"; and a priggish piece by McGough's interviewer, Michael Stephens, expounding the curse of alcohol and the blessings of marijuana. Heady days. It's hard to see what any of it had to do with either literature or revolution, men being honest or the new just world. The editor's verse is a little too much in evidence, backed up manfully by Gavin Ewart's, and one of Derek Mahon's finest poems, "Ecclesiastes", makes its first appearance.

The doggedly democratic, demagogic emphasis pervades (how inappropriately may be imagined) a piece by Simmons on some themes of Louis MacNeice; and MacNeice's famous scepticism, coupled with his ambiguous position as an Ulsterman who left, but could never leave behind him Ulster's burden of beauty or nightmare, makes him sometimes an exemplary figure, sometimes a source of continuing fascination, for the writers associated with the magazine in recent years. They have also taken to heart MacNeice's many excellences as a poet. A MacNeice special number two issues back (No 73) is one of the best of recent *Honest Ulstermen*, with a useful essay by Edna Longley on the tripartite/organic structure of *Autumn Journal*, several biographical reminiscences by friends of the poet, Gerald Dawe's forceful and agreeably quirky review of *The Strings are False*, and, most valuably, "Recantation", an autobiographical fragment from MacNeice's Zoo that deals with childhood in Belfast and the North.

When I was older and went to school in England my

nothing my equals but when I came home I belonged nowhere... When I passed the men who stood most of the day, splitting, at the corners, I imagined that they were splitting at me... A perpetual embarrassment; I was the reactor's son.

And his essay "Experience with Images". The "special" number often brings out the best in a small magazine, and *HU* is no exception. As far as its ordinary numbers are concerned, the continuing support shown by poets such as George Szirtes, Fleur Adcock, Carol Rumens (among the English-by-birth-or-adoption), Michael Longley and, above all, Paul Muldoon among the Northern Irish (see apart from poems by both the latter, Clarian Carson's appropriately wayward and esoteric review of *Why Brownlee Left* in No 67, and Michael Allen's long, illuminating piece on *Quoof* in the current number), is heartening; the reviewing of poetry, though of necessity selective, surely need not be as selective as it is — given that neither the volumes chosen for review, nor the original poems chosen for publication, manifest an aggressive programme, or even a strong editorial preference for one kind of writing over another — or as heavily-footed as it sometimes tends to be; on the discursive side, the regular appearance of both Edna Longley and Seamus Deane ensures that the magazine seldom falls below their brooding standards of critical acumen and seriousness, while the stringency and sanity of the co-editor Robert Johnstone's survey of the first publications of the Field Day pamphleteers — Deane among them — suggests that clear-sightedness and independence are the 'prevailing values' being

Johnstone is 16



# Reformists at the refinery

Arthur Marwick

DUNCAN GALLIE  
Social Inequality and Class Radicalism in  
France and Britain  
339pp. Cambridge University Press. £22.50  
(pnbcrback, £6.95).  
0521257646

For years certain sociologists have been striving to preserve credibility for the romantic notion that the working class has a special destiny in the unfolding of the historical process. Our own workers have long been a disappointment to British intellectuals: thus the anomalous conservatism of the British working class has had to be contrasted with, say, the apparent radicalism of the French. In his new book Duncan Gallie has set out upon a systematic exploration of this contrast.

First, Dr Gallie seeks to establish whether the contrast is indeed valid. He rightly criticizes Anthony Giddens and others who have generalized about the revolutionary class-consciousness of French workers from the actions and pronouncements of the activist leadership. None the less, from his own well-conceived investigation into the attitudes of refinery workers at the Isle of Grain in Kent, at Grange-mouth in Scotland, at Dunkirk in Northern France, and at Lavern in Southern France, conducted between May 1971 and December 1972, Gallie concludes that French workers do show a class radicalism more among British workers. Many more French workers than British felt a sense of psychological identification with the working class. They expressed far

greater resentment over class inequalities, and also had a sharper perception of the relationship between existing inequalities and the structure of political power. Yet Gallie also brings out convincingly that British workers were just as aware as French of the inequalities and barriers of class. Above all, he stresses that French workers, far from having a revolutionary consciousness, were not deeply committed to reformist policies and parliamentary institutions as were British workers. Thus the brilliance and subtlety of Gallie's analysis is unduly constrained by use of the modish label "class radicalism".

However, his basic point is made: French workers are different. One cogently argued stage in the analysis follows another, as we are taken through the possible determinants of French attitudes. Fundamental are work grievances, fostered by the authoritarian nature of French management, and unmediated by an effective system of collective bargaining. Beyond that, Gallie identifies the effects of exposure over time to the radical doctrines of the French left-wing political parties; very neatly he brings out how the electoral system, even after the Gaullist reforms, enhanced the effectiveness of aggressive, radical campaigning, whereas survival in the British system demanded the politics of consensus.

These first two-thirds of the book generate great excitement and carry one along as Gallie brilliantly integrates the results of his own survey with both a reworking of the results of other opinion surveys, and the conclusions of other leading social scientists. French and British. The third part of the book, in which Gallie

seeks the deeper historical context for the differences of attitude between French and British workers is even more impressive. He rightly rejects the facile argument that the strength of the Communist Party in twentieth-century France can be attributed to a specific revolutionary tradition in nineteenth-century France. Giddens's arguments about the influence of French rural radicalism in developing a revolutionary consciousness are also rejected: rural radicalism did not radicalize the French labour



"Not in Anger" by Leon Underwood (Harlow New Town), reproduced from Open Air Sculpture in Britain by W.J. Snrachen (280pp, Zwenner, £5.95, 0 302 027491).

movement, it encouraged "its evolution towards reformism".

But the major contribution of this part of the book is the chapter entitled "War and the crisis of legitimacy". Though the latter phrase scarcely proves more helpful than "class radicalism" this chapter is a fine piece of comparative historical analysis. The central puzzle, says Gallie, is "why the French working class, which had provided the basis for a reformist socialist movement prior to the First World War and had entered the war with far less resistance to the governing élites than its British counterpart, had become by the winter of 1920 far more deeply disillusioned with the institutions of its society". The answer lies in "the very different experiences of war in the two societies and the way in which war affected the relative balance of class power in the period of extreme institutional fluidity that prevailed in the immediate aftermath of the war"; the Second World War too had a sharply different impact "on the nature of social relations between employers and workers in the two societies".

Conferences have been dedicated to, and many books written about, a potential and fruitful unity between sociology and history. In recent social history admirable attempts have been made to make that unity a practical reality. In the opening pages of his book, Dr Gallie is preoccupied with theory; by the end of it he has mounted a most impressive thesis bringing out the full salience of unique historical circumstances. The result is an almost flawless blend of sociological research and historical interpretation.

and a new political mould to frame and pursue land policies which can do so.

Cox's case would be better understood by the ordinary reader if, in sustaining his thesis, he had not misnamed these critical obstacles to policy as "constraints". This weasel word from the jargon of the social sciences runs na on irritant throughout the text. The adversaries were not constrained by these obstacles. Each political party, as it came to power, set about implementing its policies with vigorous determination and with no sense of hindrance from difficulties it could or would not foresee. Eventually, the policies failed because their execution came up against unsuspected obstacles. These were not constraints. Constraints influence policy-making *ab ovo*, they do not, on obstacles do, block or divert the execution of policy.

Quibbles apart, *Adversary Politics and Land* deserves a place on the bookshelf of the serious reader in the politics of our day. One cannot avoid the suspicion, however, that its primary

purpose is polemical, being to further the fortunes of the Alliance. Even so, evidence which Cox has marshalled points to an alternative way. His case is sound: the obstacles in the path of the extreme policies of Left and Right were their unwilling. At the same time, they are his ground for compromise. It follows that either of the present major political parties, if so minded, could move towards the other's position and fashion a land policy conformable with the popular wish, wherein the inherent attitudes of landowners, financiers and planners strengthened purpose instead of undermining it. This is no mirage. For the latest news on land policy is of a (June 13, 1984) Report from the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment, under the chairmanship of Sir Hugh Rossi, which makes recommendations for policy on Green Belt and Land for Housing, unanimously subscribed to by all three parties. Land policy, even with a two-party system, need not be the victim of irreconcilable conflicts.

tion of refugee attitudes, and the degrees of integration and assimilation of the immigrants to Britain. She has interviewed more than 180 German Jews resident in Britain about their memories of Germany, their feelings about Britain and the British, their attitudes to the Anglo-Jewish community, to Israel and to Germany, their views on religion, on black people, on anti-semitism, their relations with their children, their use of the English and German languages, and above all their sense of group identity.

Unhappily, what might have been fashioned into an evocative magazine article is here dressed up in an ambitious conceptual framework and padded out into a jejune and disappointing volume. The fault lies partly in the methodology. The author admits that her respondents, who were chosen by the "snowball system", do not form a representative sample; but she nevertheless parades meaningless percentages of this and that as if to furnish a specious statistical basis for her findings. The discussion of German-Jewish refugees is preceded by a rather foggy essay on the meanings of assimilation and ethnic identity in the modern world, and by a couple of chapters on German-Jewish history, naive in conception

the interpretations offered of the thought of such figures as Gershom Scholem and Simon Dubnow.

Does a lifelike group portrait of the refugees emerge from the interviews and from the author's "participant observation"? Sadly much of this is little more than a pastiche of clichés and platitudes whose cumulative effect is merely to reinforce existing stereotypes. The author concludes that "the most conspicuous characteristics of a German-Jewish ethnicity are or rather are believed to be by the German Jews themselves: a high regard for the work ethic, for conscientiousness, perfectionism, perseverance and a strong urge for 'Kultur'". There is not much news in that. A morning's "participant observation" in Lough's coffee-shop on the Finchley Road might have yielded comparably illuminating results.

All this is a pity because the German-Jewish community affords rich material for a more penetrating study of an immigrant culture. As memories dim and the first generation of immigrants recedes such a study will probably have to depend more on the written than the spoken word. That such a study could be valuable is suggested by the occasional glimpses here beyond the interviewee's card-index

# Tito and the British

Elisabeth Barker

RADOJE AND ZHIVANKNEZHEVIC  
Sloboda III Smrt  
1,008pp. Seattle: published privately.  
VESELIN DJURETIC  
Vlada na Bespuću  
314pp. Belgrade: Narodna Knjiga.  
DUŠAN BIBER  
Tito-Charhill atrogo tajao  
558pp. Belgrade: Arhiv Jugoslavije  
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377pp. Zagreb: Globus.  
DRAGOVAN ŠEPIĆ  
Vlada Ivana Šubašića  
422pp. Zagreb: Globus.

Those who, starting from a British standpoint, have studied British policy towards Yugoslavia in the Second World War through the British official documents, and who then read the works of Yugoslav writers on the same subject, using much the same sources, are bound to have some shocks. But the experience certainly flexes mental muscles.

The subject is a particularly controversial one. Inside post-Tito Yugoslavia there is constant lively, sometimes acrid, controversy over its recent history, especially the "national liberation war" of 1941-45, even, very tentatively, over the role of Tito himself in this war. Outside the country, émigré Yugoslavs are still producing historical studies in which, usually, the only common factor is hostility to Tito and to his British wartime allies.

Most Yugoslav historians and writers, however, whether inside or outside Yugoslavia, and whether pro-Tito or anti-Tito, have a common tendency to see the British as having sacrificed Yugoslavia, or individual Yugoslavs or groups, to selfish British national or "imperial" interests. No fair-minded person could deny that, from a Yugoslav viewpoint, there is some validity in this interpretation of events (or non-events). British grand strategy in the Second World War had its victims.

In the eyes of émigré Serbians the chief "victim" of Churchill's initial support and subsequent "betrayal" was Draža Mihailović, the regular army colonel who, after the Axis conquest, was accepted and publicized as a great national leader by the Yugoslav government-in-exile and by the British, who sent him small quantities of arms and money but then dropped him in favour of the Communist, Tito, whose post-war government tried and executed him in 1946. Ever since Mihailović has been hailed as a hero and martyr by exiled Serbs.

His most authoritative champions, pointing a stern finger at the British, have been the brothers, Radoje and Zhivan Knezhević, who, within the exiled government, fought for his cause and tried to protect him from what they saw as illegitimate British interference in Yugoslavia's internal affairs. Their latest book, *Sloboda III Smrt*, a 1,000-page tome printed in the Cyrillic alphabet, is based to a considerable extent on British official documents, supplemented by material held by the authors.

The main interest of the book, for the British reader, is its detailed and well-sourced account of the long and bitter quarrel between the wartime exiled government and the British - the Foreign Office, SOE, SIS and the military authorities in Cairo and London - over the government's demand for independent radio links and ciphers, uncensored by the British, with Mihailović. The British repeatedly refused - or evaded - the request, presumably fearing that the government would use independent links to encourage Mihailović in his policy of inactivity and tacit, indirect approval of collaboration with the occupiers. The exiled government, or at least the Knezhević brothers, accused the British in terms which might have struck a sympathetic chord in Tito - as when Zhivan declared, "we are a sovereign and independent country and we will not let anyone treat us as a colony".

The practical effect of this long and inconclusive quarrel was that the exiled government - or at least the Knezhević brothers - set up their own communications with Mihailović, first through the Yugoslav diplomatic missions in Istanbul and Bern, then from August 1942

also through radio links from Cairo and subsequently Istanbul. From August 1943, there was also a radio link from Mihailović, through the American naval authorities in Baltimore, to the Yugoslav ambassador in Washington. Mihailović must therefore have been getting conflicting directives from the British and from his own government, the British calling for action against the enemy, his government urging him to spare Serbian lives and to avoid unnecessary bloodshed until the day came for the final effort to free the country. (The Knezhević brothers take the view that if the British had armed Mihailović's forces, they would, in the Autumn of 1944, have freed Serbia single-handed, without any need for Red Army intervention.)

As for the question of Mihailović's collaboration - or tolerance of collaboration - first with the Italians and later with the Germans: the Knezhević brothers dismiss such allegations as Soviet-inspired, disseminated to foster a break between Mihailović and the British and to help Tito to power. They write disparagingly of the messages sent by Captain Deakin (later Sir William Deakin), the first British officer to reach Tito's HQ, giving confirmation of the allegations. But on their side they provide no concrete disproof.

Leaving aside the vexed question of collaboration, it is not hard to see Mihailović as a victim of circumstances - of the changing requirements of British strategy and the somewhat confused and unrealistic handling of Yugoslav problems by the Foreign Office.

Lack of realism is one of the main charges made against the British, especially the Foreign Office, by a Belgrade historian, Veselin Djuretić. In his book *Vlada na Bespuću*. This is interesting because it draws freely not only on the voluminous British documents but also the exiled government's own documents, now held in the official archives in Belgrade. Its general message seems to be that the Foreign Office was so obsessed by the internal feuds within the exiled government, especially between Serbs and Croats, that it ignored the realities of what was happening inside Yugoslavia, trying instead to use the Mihailović "legend" to patch up or paper over these feuds. The British thereby made it possible for the Soviet Union to play what is described as "a subtle and fruitful role".

What this meant in practice was that - as the Knezhević brothers also note - Soviet diplomats, in their dealings with the British and the exiled government, professed that they had no intention of interfering in Yugoslavia's internal affairs, that they knew little if anything about what was going on there, and that they wished to maintain correct diplomatic relations with the exiled government. But on another level, through the Comintern and the Soviet-based Free Yugoslavia radio, Moscow gave support and international publicity to Tito's revolutionary movement and to denunciations of Mihailović's collaboration. British diplomacy was far less "subtle and fruitful": Djuretić notes that Soviet diplomats were pleased to learn of the exiled government's quarrel with the British over communications, seeing it as proof of British naivety and tactical clumsiness.

The outcome was that from the end of 1943 it was the British who alone had to bear the responsibility (and the odium) of publicly throwing over their cardboard hero, Mihailović, and basing their Yugoslav policy on a new central figure, whether as war partner, puppet, victim or perhaps eventual antagonist - the Communist, Tito.

The whole story of British relations with Tito and his revolutionary army between 1943 and 1945 is fascinating and infuriating, since it is dominated by the ambivalent and variable relationship between two powerful but complex and changeable individuals, Churchill and Tito. One invaluable source for its study is the monumental work of Dušan Biber, the Slovene historian, *Tito-Charhill atrogo tajao*. This is a scrupulously selected and carefully annotated collection of British documents bearing on the relationship between May 1943 and May 1945. The centre-piece is of course the personal correspondence between the two men which started in January 1944 in the most friendly, courteous and, on Churchill's side, admiring tones, and fizzled out in mutual dis-

illusionment and mistrust a year later.

But there is much more to Biber's book than that - messages from British officers in the field (starting with those from Deakin when he first dropped to Tito in May 1943); minutes and telegrams exchanged between Churchill and Eden; Cabinet papers, Foreign Office minutes and assessments; London-Moscow diplomatic exchanges; records of meetings, especially the Churchill-Tito meetings of August 1944 and the Eden-Molotov talks of October 1944 (though, curiously, not the full record of the Churchill-Stalin talk on spheres of influence in the Balkans at that time). There is in fact a wealth of material from which to build up a rounded and impartial picture of a many-sided and changing relationship at a crucial period of the war, when Yugoslavia was far more important to the British and their allies than it had been during what might be called the Mihailović period. In English, it would be an important source for British students of war history, as it must be, even more, for Yugoslav students and writers (even though, in the heated atmosphere of historical controversy inside Yugoslavia today, it has been attacked there on grounds which are, to the outsider, incomprehensible).

What is at present lacking is a companion volume of Yugoslav documents covering the Churchill-Tito relationship in comparable depth. But meanwhile, anyone who wants to see how the relationship looked to a Yugoslav who was close to Tito at the time, acting as his personal representative in various dealings with the British, should turn to Vladimir Velebit's *Sećanja*, which has just appeared in Yugoslavia.

This makes extremely interesting reading. It is the memoirs of a man re-examining the past both in the light of his own personal experience at the time and also in the light of his later, and wider, knowledge of the world outside Yugoslavia. To refresh his memory, Velebit had to rely heavily on the British documents, but he has given them his own historical interpretation.

Since, during and after the war - he came to London as Yugoslav ambassador in 1953 - he got to know intimately the peculiarities of the British governmental machine, his interpretations are highly intelligent and interesting. Yet they are at times controversial, and puzzling to a British reader. But he gives the impression that he is always - or almost always - trying hard to be fair to the British.

He gives various causes for the friction between the British and Tito's Partisans when they began to work together as partners. The Partisans were of course very suspicious of the British because of their public support for Mihailović. On a more serious level, when the question of British arms supplies was being discussed, there was continuing friction over the British military authorities' view that Tito should stick to guerrilla warfare instead of trying to build up a regular army complete with armour, tanks and its own air force. The Partisans were repelled by the formalism and bureaucracy of the British armed services, especially the RAF, and by their insistence -

which Velebit at moments sees as having some justification - that the Yugoslavs lacked the technical experience needed to maintain aircraft and tanks in working order.

Another grievance was that the British did not even carry out properly their promise to equip 300,000 guerrilla fighters. British arms aid in 1943 was, as Velebit correctly says, largely symbolic; thereafter it fell short of Partisan expectations. Probably the most valuable help which the British gave was their medical care for the Partisan wounded. But overall, the Partisans felt they were giving more than they received from the British, by protecting the right flank of the Allied armies in Italy against the threat of German trans-Adriatic operations based on the Yugoslav coast. (But did any such threat ever really exist? It seems doubtful.)

Then there was the key question of British operations on Yugoslav soil. According to Velebit, when, after the Italian surrender, there were proposals for joint defence of the Dalmatian islands, Tito disliked the idea of having foreign troops operating on Yugoslav territory. This dislike became a good deal stronger when he came to believe that Churchill was aiming to intervene in Yugoslavia to "restore the old social order" and the monarchy, to safeguard British post-war influence and interests. After that, all attempts at joint military planning and operations were haunted by this political spectre.

Velebit seems to see some of these many Partisan suspicions of the British as justified, some less so. At times he points briefly to the Russians as trouble-makers between the Partisans and the British (in fact following much the same tactics as in the "Mihailović period"). The arrival of a large Soviet mission to Tito early in 1944 was the occasion for outward displays of inter-Allied goodwill, but led to rivalry between British and Russians over aid to the Partisans.

During his first stay in London, in May 1944, Velebit sent his private messages to Tito, not through British channels, but through the Soviet ambassador. Meanwhile, German paratroopers attacked and narrowly failed to capture Tito at his headquarters at Drvar. Allied aircraft covered his retreat with great efficiency; but when he flew out to Italy, he chose to go in a Soviet aircraft. When Velebit met him on his arrival, Tito did not want the British to be informed and went off to the Soviet mission. Velebit - though he does not explicitly say so - was obviously puzzled and upset. Elsewhere, he comments that Tito never willingly went in a British aircraft, always preferring a less comfortable Soviet one: members of the Soviet mission ossiduously spread the idea that the British had deliberately killed the Polish leader, Sikorski, in an air crash.

Then in July 1944 came the strange incident of Tito's sudden last-minute refusal to go to Italy for a meeting with the Supreme Allied Commander, Maitland Wilson - a meeting which Tito himself had first suggested. Velebit discusses at some length all the various reasons put forward at the time, and later, for this action which, for the moment, deeply offended

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John Lucas



the British, including Churchill. Velebit very tentatively suggests one possible reason for Tito's sudden change of mind – a message from Moscow. He adds that Tito must almost certainly have informed Moscow in advance of the projected meeting, as he did almost daily of all important developments.

The friendly atmosphere of the Tito-Churchill meeting did something to lull suspicions that the British were trying to impose their will and rob the national liberation movement of final victory. But by the end of August 1944, with the Soviet Army advancing through Romania and approaching Bulgaria, it was natural that Soviet involvement in Yugoslavia should become more open and active. It was perhaps also natural that Tito should go to Moscow to see Stalin. But the suddenness and secrecy of Tito's departure from the jointly-defended island of Vis not unnaturally made Churchill furious, and badly soured his relations with Tito. Velebit again speculates that the Soviet intelligence service could have been at work. He also records, without comment, that in the days immediately after Tito's secret departure for Moscow, a series of instructions were sent by his Supreme Staff (in his absence) to local Partisan commanders on the coast to restrict and report all movement by Allied missions and to prevent landings of British troops. It is left to the reader to wonder whether or not the Russians could have had some hand in this development.

Meanwhile in Moscow, Stalin's flattering reception of Tito, his lavish offer of unlimited supplies of the tanks and aircraft which Tito had failed to get from the British, the publicized – and legally unnecessary – agreement that Soviet troops would only enter Yugoslav territory as authorized by Tito and would leave local administration in the hands of his local committees – all these things could only have the effect of countering Churchill's influence on Tito (if any), souring British-Partisan relations, and drawing the Yugoslavs firmly into the Soviet orbit.

But it would be quite wrong to suggest that Soviet trouble-making plays any significant role in Velebit's book; instances are mentioned



The (right) with some of his staff outside the mountain cabin which was his headquarters in the summer of 1944.

only briefly and in passing. The main theme, from the summer of 1944, is Churchill's efforts to create a "united government" bringing together reputable and untamished exiled politicians and Tito's representatives, under the young King Peter's aegis. Here Velebit seems to accept the traditional Partisan view that Churchill, following his class interests and imperialist aims, was seriously trying to impose a pathetic young monarch on an unwilling country and rob the revolution of its just claims to post-war power.

For British readers, this will seem a greatly over-simplified, even distorted view. It seems more likely that the plan for a "united government" was a case of a rather haphazard, typically British compromise formula which would save face all round and ward off the danger of bloodshed and confrontations, both inside and outside Yugoslavia, during the dangerous transition from war to peace.

Certainly this interpretation would find support in the excellent book by a distinguished Croat historian, Dragovna Šepić, *Vlada Ivana Šubišića*. This is based largely on the British documents but also on documents held by the author himself – he was Šubišić's chief de

cabinet during the critical period – and partly on documents held in an archive in Zagreb. Šubišić was the last of the Yugoslavs chosen by the British as their political nominee to play a leading role in Yugoslav affairs – or, as some would say, as their puppet or predestined victim. He was in fact suggested to Churchill by the American Office of Strategic Services, at a time when there seemed no other available exiled politician likely to be acceptable both to Tito and to the king, as head of a "united government". He was by all accounts an amiable, well-meaning minor Croat politician, reputed to be vain, and regarded by his various critics as weak, pliable and unreliable. However, though he certainly ended up as a rather pathetic victim of British policy – his end in Yugoslavia was far from happy – Šepić proves that he was not in fact Churchill's puppet.

Šepić shows in fascinating detail, illuminated by his own personal memories and records and his close knowledge of the personalities involved, that in the weary months of negotiation, political haggling and repeated disappointments and humiliation, Šubišić developed an unexpected streak of toughness, obstinacy and independence in his dealings

with Churchill, Tito, Stalin and the young King (or rather, perhaps, the king's mother-in-law, the Greek princess, Aspasia: there is a very funny account of a meeting between the king and Šubišić in which Aspasia did all the talking, until finally the king was provoked into a momentary effort to restrain her).

In the course of all this Šubišić, who had any realistic power base, had to face Tito's superior military and political strength inside Yugoslavia, sometimes displayed in ways designed to humiliate him; Churchill's impatience and growing mistrust, especially after Šubišić having reached agreement with Tito in Belgrade, insisted on visiting Stalin before reporting to Churchill; and, finally, the all-powerful Stalin himself.

Oddly enough, it was Stalin who gave Šubišić his last trouble. This was perhaps because he suited Stalin, just after he had done a deal with Churchill over spheres of influence in the Balkans, to butter up Churchill's nominee and to belittle the national liberation movement in the most unpleasant way. But the many months of stress and strain, before the "united government" could be formed and sanctioned by the king, Churchill, Stalin and the Americans, must have been a very severe test for a man suffering seriously from diabetes.

For himself, Šubišić gained very little – a short, uncomfortable time as foreign minister in a government headed very firmly by Tito, followed by retirement spent as a political suspect and outcast in his own country. But all this lies outside the scope of Šepić's book, which leaves him at his moment of highest achievement, when he had, as Šepić says, lessened or removed the danger of civil war in Yugoslavia and secured for it Allied recognition and support in the task of reconstruction.

Perhaps both Tito and Churchill should have been grateful to Šubišić for curbing their impatience, resisting their pressure, and so bringing about a face-saving formula acceptable to both. But it is very doubtful whether either man ever felt any gratitude. It seems only fair that forty years later an impartial and scrupulous Yugoslav historian should do justice to one of the forgotten men of the Second World War.

says Hilvert. Before long, Murdoch was forced to resign, his prestige tarnished. When he died, in 1952, his obituary in the paper he had controlled made no mention of this episode in his career.

Occasionally the metropolitan press fought back, but the news organizations on the whole were subservient. The supply of free propaganda articles was welcome to the provincial and suburban press. Radio, and the Australian Broadcasting Commission, by becoming a channel for official information, achieved a new importance. It was journalists themselves who became the censors, partly because they had been so badly treated in the First World War that they thought anything was preferable to a censorship system run by elderly and conservative-minded ex-servicemen. Many of the journalists enjoyed the work, sometimes taking it upon themselves to sub-edit and rewrite as well as to censor the copy.

One part of the system kept its head: a broadcasting service to foreign countries, including Japan, under a vigorous political scientist from Melbourne University, W. MacMahon Ball. He had fought censorship before the war, when much Marxist literature had been banned. During the war, he opposed (successfully) the government's desire to present a bland picture of a united country where citizens were all fully behind everything the government did. His statement of principle is still pertinent. "The basic issue is clear," he wrote. "There can be no adulation without controversy, and there can be no controversy without freedom. To play for safety is the most dangerous way for democracy to try to live."

It is a pity that Mr Hilvert does not deal with the censorship of books. It would have been interesting to learn, for instance, who was responsible for butchering M. Barnard Eldershaw's novel *Tomorrow and Tomorrow* because it speculated about revolutionary upheavals in Australia after the war.

## Authorized versions

Stephen Bann

MARC FERRO  
*The Use and Abuse of History: or How the Past is Taught*  
257pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £15.95.  
0710096585

Earlier this year the Historical Association arranged a special conference to discuss the future of history within the British educational syllabus, at which the most eagerly awaited speaker was the Secretary of State for Education. It goes without saying that the Secretary of State warmly endorsed the value of historical studies. But the form in which his endorsement came caused a tremor of consternation to pass through certain members of his professional audience. History was to be taught, at our schools and universities, with a view to the fact that Britain was now a multicultural society. At the same time, it was suggested that a heavy emphasis should lie on the study of British history and British institutions to the exclusion of a certain amount of "clutter" whose precise content the audience were left to imagine for themselves.

Anyone who might have been surprised or indignant at this juncture would draw solace and profit from looking at *The Use and Abuse of History*. Marc Ferro, who is a co-director of the journal *Annales* and a distinguished historian of the Great War and Russian Revolution, has had the excellent idea of discovering how history is taught in a wide variety of different societies throughout the world. Obviously it would take an encyclopedia, rather than a study by a single author, to do justice to the vast number of contemporary societies which lay claim to a particular historical identity and attempt to inculcate it through the educational system. Ferro is well aware of this, and he fully acknowledges the amount of expert help which he has had to draw upon even for this scaled-down version of the world panorama. He is also willing to concede, as will be obvious to the reader, that some of his chapters dealing with a particular society are much more sketchy and impressionistic than others. Nevertheless, with all its faults and limitations, his study has the singular effect of bringing into focus a dimension of historical awareness which is much more integral to the understanding of the contemporary world than we might have thought. Why do Iraq and Iran continue to fight one another with on unremitting and apparently inexhaustible hostility? At least

part of the answer seems to lie in the way widely differing historical traditions have grown up about the degree to which Arab history can be more or less closely identified with the history of Islam. Why does the Soviet Union take exception to the ceremonies which celebrate the anniversary of the Normandy landings? Ferro shows that this is not simply a capricious gesture, but the logical outcome of an official historical viewpoint on the events of the Second World War which differs at many essential points from the version entertained by the Allies.

Not the least valuable aspect of this study is the way it draws attention to the close links between official versions of the past which have been elaborated by contiguous or historically related societies. Lévi-Strauss once described the affinity and difference between the myths cherished by two neighbouring North American Indian tribes in terms of an inverted image which can be obtained from narrowing an aperture. Ferro shows the symmetry and disparity between the versions of African history purveyed in Johannesburg and Black Africa; he notes how carefully the official history of present-day Poland is adapted to displaying the Germans, and even the Swedes, as traditional enemies, while drawing a veil over the threat from the East and systematically suppressing the connections of the Catholic Church with the history of Polish nationalism. The fact that nearly all the material is drawn from textbooks which are used in schools accounts for the particularly blatant character of the omissions and distortions which are recorded here. More sophisticated historical analyses would presumably not be required to nail their colours to the mast in an egregious fashion. But it would be wrong to conclude that Ferro is simply conducting a polemic against official Marxist and non-Marxist historiography. Reflecting on the periodization of world history as it is taught in Russian schools, he notes the advantages of a model of modern development which begins with political and industrial transformations in seventeenth-century Britain rather than passing to eighteenth-century Britain by way of the "predominance" of Spain, and the France of Louis XIV.

Coming close to home, Ferro is good enough to note that: "In England, history is less and less that it is anti-British in France." The evidence given is scanty, but fair enough as far as it goes. No doubt we cannot put down to anti-French sentiment the fact that he has been saddled with an anonymous translation which

does not really try to convert French idiom into its English equivalent, and commits silly mistakes like italicizing the names of film directors as if they were names of films. Nor can we really account in any such terms for the fact that the book has acquired a resonant, Nietzschean title which hardly fits in the place of the modest and accurate original title. *Comment on raconte l'histoire aux enfants*. It would be a great pity if these blemishes, which are compounded by an extremely informal system of references and an apparently defective bibliography, were to alienate potential readers.

Ferro exposes distortion and suppression of historical fact wherever his attention lights, but this does not mean that he takes refuge in a sceptical relativism. He concludes appropri-

ately enough with a series of prescriptions for the teaching of history which is both comprehensive and demanding. Students must acquire "a chronological sense of the national past", but also "a knowledge of the differing visions and interpretations of that past"; they should be "introduced to an understanding of other societies", and made capable of evaluating the "relationship between particular problems (towns, regions, countries) and the overall course of history"; and they should acquire "a practical knowledge of social science methods" in order to facilitate their "assessment of historical and contemporary problems". There is more to come, and how much of it (one is tempted to ask) might in certain quarters be classified as "clutter"?

## A bouquet of daffodils

Peter R. Roberts

R. R. DAVIES, RALPH A. GRIFFITHS,  
IEUAN GWYNEDD JONES and  
KENNETH O. MORGAN (Editors)  
*Welsh Society and Nationhood: Historical Essays presented to Glanmor Williams*  
248pp. Cardiff: University of Wales Press. £25.  
07083 08600

Glanmor Williams is Professor Emeritus of History in the University of Wales, the founding editor of both *The Welsh History Review* and the *Glanmor County History*, the author of a magisterial work on the medieval Church, and of particular studies of the Reformation, in Wales. A projector among historians and a pioneering scholar with wide-ranging interests in Welsh academic and public life, he deserves well of his community and his profession. The four editors of this garland, a veritable committee of flower arrangers, have gathered offerings from past and present colleagues at Swansea and from his contemporaries in the professoriate. Not all of these are from or of Wales or even historians. There is the odd rose among the daffodils.

The pieces by Henry Loyn and Caerwyn Williams, dealing respectively with the role of the Celts in the Conversion of the English and the oral tradition of the bards in the Dark Ages, match well as counterparts to Glanmor Williams's early studies on the contribution of the British Legend and Tudor Welsh historiography to the apologetics of the English Reformation. In a most elegant essay on "Cultural Survival in an Age of Conquest", David Walker argues that in the twelfth century "significant literary figures were men of mixed blood" who "had not only to record and report the condition of Wales and its frontier, but to resolve within themselves the tension created by their own ancestry". Orderic Vitalis and Gerald of Wales are thus considered as comparable figures to Aelfred of Rievaulx. Rees Davies is able to bring to his study of "Law and National Identity in Thirteenth-Century Wales" an unrivalled command of the intricacies of both native and marcher laws. He argues, not without ingenuity, that systems of law could be invoked as potent emblems in promoting national unity in Wales as in England, even after the eclipse of princely power. Ralph Griffiths finds precedents for his own intellectual odyssey across the Bristol Channel in his exploration of medieval "Severnside" (a word coined quite innocently by John Leland in Henry VIII's reign) as a "cultural province" which experienced a cross-fertilization of influences from both sides in migrations, commerce and the traffic of administrators.

The new interest in "maritime Wales" is catered for by D. B. Quin's astute scrutiny of the part played by Welshmen in early modern British expansion. If he is prevented from arriving at confident conclusions, it is not because of accumulating mytha or ingenious theories such as that which would replace Amerigo Vesputci with Richard Ameryk (ap Meyrick), a Welsh merchant of Bristol (fl. c. 1500), as the eponymous pioneer of New World discovery, but by the ambivalence of the documentary sources relating to Welsh nomenclature. To a study of "Wales and Parliament, 1542-81", Geoffrey Elton brings a special insight into the processes of Tudor legislation to show the difference of Welsh MPs.

In the forty years after enfranchisement, in using the Commons to gain legislative boons for their own communities. There is no good reason for stopping at 1581, except that this is where Neale chose to end the first volume of his work on Elizabethan parliament. A longer survey may well yield different emphases, and there is more to be said even about this limited span than is attempted here, but Professor Elton speaks to his revisionist brief with his customary panache. Peter Smith adds notes of emendation to his published views on the pattern of distribution of building types, and suggests that in the incidence of decorations like the ornate roof in jure-Elizabethan structures, "England and Wales are architecturally *sui generis*", while medieval peasant houses in the lowland and intermediate zones of Britain have survived more plentifully than on the Continent. This rather technical survey is rendered more accessible by his copious illustrations; most of its companions would have benefited from at least a map apiece.

All the "modern" essays elaborate upon the social and ideological links that consolidated the union with England while yet preserving the Welsh identity. In "The Sweating Astrologer: Thomas Jones the Almanaceer (1648-1713)", Gerald Jenkins summarizes his weighty Welsh book on an eccentric who was a devoted Anglican, a champion of the Welsh poetic tradition and an active spokesman for a distinctive Welsh consciousness in his ephemeral publications. Sir John Habakkuk, doyen of the Barry school of English social historians, writes on the dynasticism of landed families in his home county of Glamorgan so engagingly that one can only regret that the schoolboy's curiosity about his *cynfein* has taken so long to be satisfied. Frys Morgan unpeels the layers of misrepresentation surrounding the "Blue Books" controversy in the history books, exposes the tangled roots and complicated ironies of the 1846 Education Commission Report and thereby establishes his own reputation as the analyst, if not debunker, *par excellence* of the creative legends of modern Wales. There is architectonic balance as well as empathy in I. G. Jones's treatment of the religious politics of Victorian church building in the principality, a pendant to his comprehensive analysis of the Religious Census of 1851. "The Welsh in British Politics, 1868-1982" is a canter through the tract of history that Kenneth Morgan has made peculiarly his own, when Welsh Members, unlike their Tudor predecessors, seized their opportunities after the extension of the franchise. The story has continued to unfold dramatically even as this volume was in the press.

This collection celebrates Glanmor Williams as essayist and academic statesman rather than as a researcher, for there is a regrettable absence of anything to mark the influence of the main body of his work on a younger generation of historians. What we have here is best regarded as a *fortilegium* to a working scholar, rather than one resting on his laurels. His forthcoming full-scale study of the Reformation in Wales is eagerly awaited. Six of the contributors are Fellows of the British Academy, and yet Glanmor Williams is not of their company. Readers of this sheaf of tributes and of the impressive list of his publications that accompanies it are entitled to wonder why this is so.

## Samuel Johnson 1709-84

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## Tending to suppress

Michael Davie

JOHN HILVERT  
*Blue Pencil Warriors: Censorship and propaganda in World War II*  
256pp. University of Queensland Press.  
£22.50.  
07022 19533

For democracy, wartime censorship presents special difficulties, as Britain was reminded during the Falklands war. John Hilvert's book gives a careful account of censorship and propaganda in Australia during the Second World War, but the muddles and distortions of purpose it describes have parallels far outside Australia. The problem is always the same. When the conflicts begin, all agree that censorship will be strictly confined to news that would harm national security. In practice, the armed services seek to suppress virtually all news except news of victories, and politicians use censorship to protect their own skills or to promote their own policies.

The Australian Prime Minister, R. G. Menzies, set up a Department of Information the day after the war began. Its functions, he announced, would be to "tell the truth about the cause"; to keep "the minds of people enlightened and their spirit firm"; and to provide "soundly based truth". However, in the guise of withholding information of value to the enemy, Menzies's censors often interfered with reports of events in order to protect the government from embarrassment. Under his Labour successor, John Curtin, censorship became an adjunct of foreign policy. His main aim was to stop any news seeping out that would discourage the Americans – on whom Australia became wholly dependent after the fall of Singapore – from regarding Australia as a worthy ally.

Many absurd decisions were taken. Gone

with the *Wind* was cut by some fifteen minutes for Australian audiences because it was thought that some sequences would prejudice recruiting. Among the omissions was a statement by Captain Rhett Butler that "most of the miseries of the world are caused by wars and when wars are over, no one ever knows what they were about". Editors and broadcasters were warned not to allow articles or talks that attacked the system of raising war funds by the sale to the public of War Bonds.

There was overt political censorship. A newspaper was told not to print an article criticizing Menzies's private life (even though the authorities had never seen the article, which in fact did not exist). In 1940, editors who had been playing up the strength of the French Army were suddenly told to play it down, to prepare the Australian public for France's capitulation. Articles deploring the shortage of defence equipment were banned. General MacArthur's communiqués had to be published in full, and were not open to any comment or speculation at all. References to censorship itself were censored. So was *Hansard*, when MPs criticized the way censorship was being applied. The military wanted to ban the comic strip, "Wally and the Major" on the grounds that it was subversive to address the Major in terms used by Wally.

Censorship in order to deny the enemy information of value soon turned into propaganda. The first Director-General of Information, was Sir Keith Murdoch, Australia's "most powerful media magnate". His brief was "to arrange for and control the utilization of every avenue of publicity" to promote "the psychological side of the war effort". Murdoch told the War Cabinet he wanted his organization to be a "department of expression", not just a "department of suppression". Opponents complained that he had appointed himself editor-in-chief of every newspaper in Australia. So he had. His "proposals smacked of dictatorship".

John Hilvert



# All too immediate

## Dick Davis

R. D. SMITH (Editor)  
The Writings of Anna Wickham: Free woman and poet  
404pp. Virago. £6.50.  
086668-1822

In the 1920s and 30s Anna Wickham had a considerable reputation as a poet: the bubble soon burst, and since her suicide in 1947 her work has been virtually forgotten. This anthology, which includes prose as well as a generous selection of her poems, attempts to re-establish her as a respected and interesting writer.

The most substantial piece in the book is the prose "Fragment of an Autobiography" written in 1935: this makes for harrowing reading—we learn of the endless privations and petty snobberies of her family's precarious lower middle-class existence in London and Australia, of her appalling emotional vampire of a mother and of her sensitive and ineffectual father (though he was effective enough to extract with unintentional cruelty a promise from his ten-year-old daughter that she would be a poet: the pact was made on Wickham Terrace in Brisbane, and its seriousness for Anna is shown by the fact that she took Wickham as her pseudonym). Marriage did not greatly improve things: her husband was from the class she had been taught to fear and envy—"the villa-dwellers" she called them—and the couple's happiness was short-lived. She sought solace from

her sons to whom she was fiercely devoted; motherhood seems to have been the experience that gave her most satisfaction, and one of her greatest griefs—the death of one of her sons at the age of four.

The social milieu described in "Fragment" recalls H. G. Wells's novels, but the tone is close to D. H. Lawrence's—Anna Wickham knew Lawrence, and the book also contains a spirited and largely convincing attack on Lawrence's notions about women; she shares Lawrence's fury, his accuracy in describing emotion ("I had that queer feeling of levity which is the mind's adjustment to tragedy"), his gift for the throw-away aphorism ("that social fear which is the spirit of all snobbery"), and just occasionally his asinine portentousness. The essay is vigorous and moving, and the reader turns to the poems with high expectations.

But they are wretchedly bad. This is from the first of them

I am tired of the rounded sky:  
The everlasting dome has held me in.  
I have looked for change in all lands  
And I have found myself beneath the half-sphere.

And this is typical. They offer vatic immensities expressed in embarrassingly reach-me-down language (coy inversions, "poetic" archaisms, a population of kings, slaves—a great many slaves—gallants, wantons, wizards—almost anyone but a real person). A few poems are not like this, and they are without exception about her husband, her children or her experience of housekeeping; these can be believably tender,

angry or sardonic. But most of the poems are simply bits of "poetic" language flung together for effect, or they are attempts to *épater* the villa-dwellers.

What makes all this so tragic is that Anna Wickham was clearly aware of the falseness of such posturings, and analyses them mercilessly in her description of her mother's behaviour. And she was also aware of how ruinous this impulsive parade of emotion had been in her own life ("I acted not instinct, and my instinct seems to have been almost invariably wrong"). In his memoir of the poet, R. D. Smith remarks on her "passionate intellectual commitment to immediate feeling, from which all truth is inseparable". But her prose indicates that she knew only too well that immediate feeling is as often as not fake feeling, as likely to obscure the truth as to embody it. Unfortunately she seems to have been unable to use this knowledge in her poetry; she virtually admits that her poems are slapdash and inept when she writes that they have "the incompetence of pain". Pain and incompetence are certainly both present, but it is specious, and typical of the sloppy thinking that she seems to have thought appropriate to poetry, to offer the one as a covert justification for the other.

The book is listed as "Literature/Autobiography" and it is Wickham's life story rather than her poetry which has, I suspect, prompted Virago to publish it. Her struggle for independence from her mother's influence and then from her husband's, and her divided devotion to her writing and her children, make her a



typically feminist heroine. But the book makes extravagant and unjustifiable claims; on the front cover she is described as "Anna Wickham, Free Woman and Poet"; her life was too waste by unnecessary suffering but she was not much of a poet and it seems that she herself knew this; as for a "free woman", her writing show that this is the very last thing she was.

## In all seriousness

### John Batchelor

JANEMARCUS (Editor)  
Virginia Woolf: A feminist slant  
281pp. University of Nebraska Press. £21.20.  
0803230818

BRENDA R. SILVER  
Virginia Woolf's Reading Notebooks  
384pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press.  
£23.80.  
0691061793

JUDY LITTLE  
Comedy and the Woman Writer: Woolf, Spark, and feminism  
224pp. University of Nebraska Press. £13.50.  
0803228597

MADELINE MOORE  
The Short Season Between Two Silences: The mystical and the political in the novels of Virginia Woolf  
189pp. Allen and Unwin. £17.50.  
0048000221

PATRICIA CLEMENTS and ISOBEL GRUNDY (Editors)  
Virginia Woolf: New critical essays  
224pp. Vision. £14.95.  
085478 0556

Three of these five books are avowedly feminist and their concern is as much with sexual politics as with literary criticism. This is just as well, since some of the literary criticism they contain is strikingly bad. The collection edited by Jane Marcus, *Virginia Woolf: A feminist slant*, proceeds from the puzzling assertion that Woolf is not taken sufficiently seriously; the reason for this alleged under-exposure is that the "clearing house for literary canonization" is manned by a "thick and reluctant clergy" (dominated by males, obviously). Can anyone these days really propose that Virginia Woolf is inadequately recognized? More is known about her life, friends, opinions, ancestry, sexuality, jottings and marginalia (see the fine edition of her reading notebooks by Brenda Silver) than about those of almost any other writer and she is on the reading list in every university in the world. The individual readings in this collection are frequently erratic. For example, Clarissa Dalloway is a "lesbian who marries for safety" and is "erotically inflamed" by Miss Kilman's threat "to steal her daughter"; these remarks vulgarize out of all recognition the delicate and exact delineation of Clarissa's bisexuality which is given in *Mrs Dalloway*. An article on fathers makes the scarcely original comment that Mr Ramsay in *To the Lighthouse* is a despotic husband, and follows this with a

sentence which it may seem cruel to quote: "One wonders if the encoded message of his surname (the *ram* says) was meant by Woolf to conjure subliminal visions of the supreme male bull decreeing commands to his lesser females."

Judy Little's feminism in *Comedy and the Woman Writer* is of a more responsibly literary kind. She takes a hint from C.L. Barber's *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy* and examines inversion, mockery and "liminality" in Woolf, Muriel Spark and other women writers. She is surely right to see comedy as a profound form which says "dangerous things obliquely" and to see sex identity, the division into male and female, as a powerful "norm" which Woolf mocks. But are comedy and feminist subversion present in all the places in which this study finds them? Is Septimus Smith, the shell-shocked former soldier in *Mrs Dalloway*, a "comic Christ" in whom one of the "most famous images of male liminality is mocked"? (Surely Septimus's madness explored so subjectively and sympathetically by the novel that he can't be seen as "mocked" in any sense.) And is Mr Ramsay a "macho" of unconscious grief, as he sails to the lighthouse? (James has discovered a new respect and affection for his father in the course of that final journey in *To*

*The Lighthouse* and the reader inevitably shares James's perspective to some extent.) The thesis works best with *Orlando*, which is indeed a comedy organized round an androgynous central figure who can reasonably be described as a "vigorous counter-culture of one".

Madeline Moore also devotes a good deal of attention in *The Short Season Between Two Silences* to *Orlando*. For her, *Orlando* is central because it is an uninhibited expression of the lesbian "grande passion" for Vita Sackville-West. It is undoubtedly a brilliant book with a magnificent blend of fantasy and literary parody, but wasn't Woolf herself right to regard it as a play-thing? She records in her diary that she was amazed when Leonard thought it "in some ways better than *The Lighthouse*" and reflected "the truth is I expect I began it as a joke and went on with it seriously. Hence it lacks some unity". Moore agrees about the lack of unity, and blames that on poor Leonard. She sees the marriage of Orlando to Marmaduke Bonithrop Shelmardine as an artistic mistake which was in a sense forced on Woolf because in the figure of Shelmardine she "displaces her own ambiguous feelings about marriage to Leonard". It is true that she sometimes felt that marriage was a trap (it "reduces one to damnable servility", she wrote to

Vanessa) but this doesn't sufficiently support the argument that Leonard was an insensitive and restrictive husband who treated his anorexic inappropriately and unconsciously inhibited her talent. Indeed his months of vigil at her bedside persuading her to eat, his sturdy refusal to allow her to be certified, his acceptance of the absence of children and the marriage's non-consummation and his subordination of his own literary ambitions to hers, suggest a husband who was capable of a striking degree of self-abnegation.

Moore has an intriguing notion that *Between the Acts* was to have been a triumphantly subversive feminist novel but that in the event it displays a broken-backed complicity with male values; that Woolf felt that "it would be a mistake from all points of view to publish it" (as she said in a letter eight days before she killed herself) because she believed that it betrayed her failure (in Moore's words) "as a feminist, as a revolutionary and as a lover of women". The circumstances in which she wrote it—the outbreak of the Second World War forcing her into total dependence on Leonard and into consequent separation from her current "lover", Ethel Smyth—drive her, in this view, to relinquish her wish to place women at the centre of the history of civilization which the novel sets out. I don't in the end agree with this argument, but I find it a suggestive and striking exploration of this teasing and mysterious final work.

The contributors to *Virginia Woolf: New critical essays* are not claiming Woolf for feminism, and their emphasis is surely right: Woolf is a great novelist and critic and a major theorist of Modernism who also happened to be a woman and a lesbian. Lyndall Gordon writes an intuitive and carefully considered essay on the kind of biography that Woolf approved; this argues very well for the biography of her that Gordon is to publish soon. There is a well-balanced piece on Woolf's response to Joyce (admiration mixed with competitiveness and envy) by Maria Dibattista, an acute essay on the appropriateness of "elegy" as a literary form in the age of Modernism by John Mepherin, an illuminating account of the "tunnelling process" by Susan Dick, and a well-documented discussion of her debt to her father, Leslie Stephen, by S. P. Rosenbaum. The editors contribute able pieces on her narrative and her use of names. These essays, together with Madeline Moore's book and the *Reading Notebooks*, are the items from my batch of Woolfiana that I shall want to refer to.

LACHLAN MACKINNON

## Pictures from an exhibition

### J.K.L. Walker

EMYR HUMPHREYS  
Jones  
138pp. Dent. £8.95.  
0460 046608

In this brief but compressed novel Emyr Humphreys wryly explores, through the curriculum vitae of his hero Herbert Goronwy Jones, the rootlessness and rejection of responsibility that may underlie and vitiate metropolitan success. The success, in Jones's case, is more than usually relative. At the age of fifty-seven he remains a senior lecturer in Education at a London college, having, he imagines, remained politely standing so that his colleague Jolly may occupy the Chair; Jolly's contempt waxes on this evidence of slender ambition and still slender output of papers. Even Jones's Welsh smallholder parents see him as a failure because of his continued absorption in the London dream to the exclusion of such realities as taking over the farm, or a professorship at Bangor, or marriage to Glenys, the daughter of neighbouring Brynswaen. But having struck off the ball and chain of his Welshness, Jones to his surprise hears at the end an even more melancholy clanking at his heels, coming from the ghostly train of unfruitful relationships. Early retirement beckons: sustained by the proceeds of his art collection and the unflinching

services of the Royal Borough of Kensington, he will take up the role of a rich recluse.

Lying awake at four o'clock one morning, Jones thus puts together a major retrospective of his career. The exhibition is cunningly hung. Scenes from Jones's childhood as the clever son enduring the rigours of life on a Welsh hill farm and the harshness of a despotic father are juxtaposed with early days in London where, as the years pass, Jones sharpens up his wits through his contacts with artistic circles and in particular with the iconoclastic musician Wharton. Interspersed are sketches of work in progress, as Jones prepares to abandon his dying career, and of the final stages of his involvement with his background: his father's funeral, his mother's widowhood, a visit to the farm, Brynllwyd, now a suburbanized retirement retreat for an LCI couple who, roses round the door notwithstanding, are doing their best by Welsh culture: the massive oak still stands among alien lawns, bringing tears to Jones's eyes. Back quickly to Ennismore Gardens.

Jones, of course, is a droll; and a Welsh droll at that. He knows all about himself, particularly his native disposition towards rhetoric which, given Humphreys's own Welshness, may not be seen as an unbalanced attack on a minority culture. He allows Jones a good deal of rope at times; thus:

"When she moved to the bathroom her waist was a holy fulcrum of graciousness and balance. When she

returned refreshed and smelling of lavender her breasts were the dayspring from on high. They moved towards me like stimulating delicate gifts. Her nipples, one might have murmured at the time but if not I murmur now with subdued fervour, were stronger and more enduring than the legs of marathon runners. Glenys. Glenys. . . .

but twitches it a sentence or two later with

Glenys naked from whatever angle viewed was an experience beyond mere self-interest. The exploration of that magnetic field was an exercise in undiminishable reality.

Hauled away, just, from the opening trap. A wisp of suspicion is left in the air that Humphreys is over-indulging his creation: *Qui s'accuse, s'excuse*.

Jones's treatment of Glenys is the more ludicrous of the novel, occupying, as it does, much of its length: Glenys and Jones as children on the beach; Glenys as a brist St George's probationer nurse, unhappy with Hyde Park Corner and its insincere surroundings; Glenys and Jones, engaged, driven by the Welsh properties to sexual intercourse against a tree in a parental valley; Glenys's final departure for America as the wife of Keith, a prospering neurosurgeon who bores practical holes in real skulls rather than dreamily stroking Benin heads, as does Jones. The memory of the final scene with Glenys similarly joins Jones's collection of precious artefacts: yielding offering her his unyieldable marriage block, he takes back the engagement ring with relief and

puts another record on the gramophone.

Do you marry the girl from the valley or don't you? Upwardly mobile young men in the 1950s had trouble with this question; still more their fictional nibbards. Against it was the fear of entangling your newly fledged intellect and imagination in a net of prosaic affection; for it, acceptance and understanding. Nurses like Glenys were a particular danger. Jones's guilt over her is to some extent factitious, excluding as it does consideration of her gift for reducing Jones's flood of ideas to a warm shower of words—although, by the end, as he himself is aware, the two are not readily distinguishable. Jones is what those irreverent, introspective comic heroes of the 1950s have become—still, as old age and loneliness close in, compulsively fleeing dim provincial society and ending up jogging round in circles inside their own heads where, of course, you meet a better, or at least more entertaining class of person. That the London society presented here should emerge as perceptibly dimmer than the Principality is a weakness of the novel: shadowy characters and perfunctory backgrounds are no help when the reader is asked to believe in Jones's lifelong commitment to the metropolitan scene. That he should be more inclined to put his trust in Jones's valedictory "Truth was my religion. And still is in a circumspect sort of way" speaks for Humphreys's skill in creating a likeable and amusing protagonist, if at times an irritatingly prolix one.

## Growing up sturdy

### Patricia Craig

JOHN O'CONNOR  
Come Day—Go Day  
181pp. £3.50.  
0856403105  
SAM KEERY  
The Last Romantic Out of Belfast  
175pp. £3.95.  
0856403075  
Belfast Blackstaff Press.

Both these accomplished novels are about growing up sturdy and observant in Northern Ireland. The events of *Come Day—Go Day*, John O'Connor's only full-length work of fiction (originally published in 1948, and not reissued until now), take place on the outskirts of Armagh, in a poor street overlooked by a spinning mill and subject to flooding at its lower end, and in the nearby countryside. Mill Row, as the street is called, brings out in its inhabitants a special brand of drollery and robustness, exemplified in a highly distinctive crop of catchphrases. John O'Connor's use of a Northern Irish idiom is pretty well unique: before this time, no other author had handled it so effortlessly, or avoided so completely the mawkishness and falsity we generally associate with Irish dialects of an extreme type. You have only to consider the verbal inanities of a writer like Lynn Doyle ("Far marry sake, sir", sez Davis, "don't let that disprate fellow touch it . . .") to understand just how remarkable O'Connor's approach to dialect actually was.

From Carleton-on, a good many Ulster novelists went out of their way to render phonetically the peculiarities of local pronunciation, often to deplorable effect. There were exceptions. Michael McLaverty, in a couple of admirable novels (*Call My Brother Back*, 1939, and *Lost Fields*, 1941), dealt rather more fastidiously with the business of reproducing pungent colloquialisms; but McLaverty is altogether more subdued and sober in style than John O'Connor. What's immediately striking about O'Connor's discourse is its wit:

"My God, this holy day and hour" she cried, as the cart stopped outside the door. "A nice looking set of ornaments you are, I must say, sitting there like a pig in the night; and the water running out of you."

The speaker is a mother welcoming home her husband and sons who've been ought to be downpour; in the Row, every commonplace incident evokes the fullest response, and this makes for continuous animation. Verbal agility and a kind of mocking showmanship are the qualities that count.

John O'Connor's central character is the boy Neilly Coyle, eleven or thereabouts, whose mother keeps a hucksters' shop; Neilly, like all spirited children, continually wants to be in on things: a jaunt to the pictures, a game of long bullets in which the local champion thrower is matched against a man from Belfast, a parade in honour of St Patrick's Day. Trailing along behind him on most occasions is his younger brother Shemie, a luckless child with a penchant for falling into the Callan river, and making a great to-do about it:

As they looked up, a young boy came round in the Row, hurrying through the crowd of fellows, howling piteously. "Saeared Heart of Jesus!" Killy exclaimed. "It's Shemie . . . That young fellow will be drowned yet."

Shemie succeeds in annoying his father in the opening pages and loses his copy of *Funny Wonder* as a result, an occurrence that prompts his vigorous grandmother to remark with vehemence: "It would have been a charity if your father had flung you into the fire after your comics." No one is hurt by this kind of invective, which is simply a way of dramatizing ex-

acerbation. If you can't give vent to your feelings in the Row, you might as well throw yourself in the Callan river.

O'Connor satisfactorily recreates an era of shawls and cloth caps, periodic unemployment, gatherings at street corners, Saturday afternoon matinees, seasonal enthusiasms among the children, imprudent uncles with a talent for raising the spirits of everyone around them. Like Henry Green and his successors, he is alive to the outlandish element in ordinary behaviour and its comic effects.

The action of *Come Day—Go Day* is confined to a period of rather less than a year; Sam Keery's impressive first novel is similarly episodic in structure, though it evokes an entire childhood and boyhood, taking in the war years in Belfast and the late 1940s. Both books are located in that area where fiction and autobiography converge, and both authors are adept at establishing an effective atmosphere. Both, as it happened, emigrated young: John O'Connor (born in 1920) died in Queensland in 1960, while Sam Keery left Belfast for Australia in 1951.

## Macho manipulations

### Savkar Altinel

JORGE IBARGUENGOTIA  
Two Crimes  
197pp. Chatto and Windes/The Hogarth Press.  
£8.95 (paperback, £3.95).  
0701128178

Two dangers await any writer dealing with the Third World. The poverty and suffering he confronts can drive him to a tear-jerking emotionalism; or the knowledge that such conditions are due, at least in part, to superstition, stupidity and widespread corruption can drive him to a barren disgust, which while rarer is no less debilitating. Mexican novelist Jorge Ibaranguotia's first novel to be translated into English, *The Dead Girls*, based on a notorious real-life case involving the discovery of the bodies of six prostitutes in the grounds of a brothel in a remote part of Mexico, was remarkable for its avoidance of both extremes. The result was an outrageous tale told without outrage, a tragicomedy all the more effective for being so completely deadpan in tone.

Readers who remember that triumph are likely to be a little disappointed by *Two Crimes*, which was in fact written some years earlier. The story involves Marcos, a Mexico City radical who, falsely accused of a terrorist act, flees to the provincial town of Muérdago

where, having established himself in the home of his dying uncle Ramón, he soon reverts, without any great sense of irony, to the *macho* ethic and petit-bourgeois opportunism, seducing his cousin Amalia and her attractive teenage daughter Lucero and cheerfully planning to defraud his uncle of some 50,000 pesos, with the result that he is soon accused of another crime he has not committed. Some deft manipulation of events by the author sees to it that poetic justice is done.

Amid all this there are some memorable glimpses of Mexican realities. The opening pages, which describe a party in Marcos's apartment, attended by, among others, a member of the secret police, neatly sum up the strange world of left-wing intellectuals from underdeveloped countries, whose harmless if silly pastimes differ from those of their counterparts in Europe or the US only in that they are taken so seriously by the authorities that owning a Che Guevara poster or singing protest songs can ultimately become the act of daring their perpetrators imagine them to be.

The book is also good on the way of mind where connections or a bribe will secure anything from "moral support" to an outright violation of the Constitution; as Marcos's casa demonstrates, even charges of arson and murder will be dropped if the price is right. Above all, small-town Mexican mores, at once gallant

and predatory, and always uneasy with women unless they are prostitutes, are captured perfectly. A brief chapter which relates how, as a young man, Marcos's uncle abandoned his upper-class fiancée for a girl he had been introduced to by a local madam manages to be simultaneously funny and moving. Its equally ironic treatment of both tragedy and happiness gives an indication of the direction Ibaranguotia's style was to develop in later.

All that, however, remains very much in the background; this novel devotes most of its energies to flirting with the conventions of hedonism farce and the detective story, sating Marcos from lover to lover and describing enigmatic incidents which later turn out to contain "clues". The actions of the characters are not really placed in the Mexican context, and as a result *Two Crimes*, although entertaining, is distinctly lightweight. Ibaranguotia was among the 181 passengers killed when a Colombian Airlines Boeing 747 crashed near Madrid last November. His publishers would have been wiser to let his Anglophone admirers remember him by the incomparably better *Dead Girls*.

Delella of the Christopher Ewart-Biggs Memorial Prize, awarded for a work judged to have contributed most to Ewart-Biggs's ideals, may be had from the National Book League, Book House, 45 East Hill, London SW18.



# A tale of two cobblers

Eva Gillies

FLORA ANNIE STEEL  
Tales of the Punjab: Told by the people  
Illustrated by David Gentlemen  
310pp. Bodley Head. Paperback. £4.95.  
0370012712  
JOSEPH JACOBS  
English Fairy Tales  
Illustrated by Margery Gill  
344pp. Bodley Head. Paperback. £4.95.  
037001023X

Towards the end of the last century, when folklore was academically more fashionable than it is now, a remarkable young woman called Flora Annie Steel, the wife of a Chief Magistrate in the Indian Civil Service, was accompanying her husband on his winter tours of the Punjab. Everywhere he held a *darbar* she would cause a carpet to be spread beneath a tree "far enough away from bureaucracy to let the village idlers approach it should they feel so inclined". She would take up her position and wait patiently for a group of curious women and children to gather around her; and, after a little general conversation on such topics of common interest as the number of witches in the village or the best cures for the evil eye, would proceed to elicit a story; usually, she tells us, from a young boy.

Many of the tales in this collection came to her at first in fragments: an individual narrator might produce "nothing save some feeble variant of a well-known legend, or what is worse, a compilation of oddments which have lingered in a faulty memory from half a dozen distinct stories". She took notes, compared, "selected carefully with the object of securing a good story in what appears to be its best form"; translated with equal care, published a number of stories in the *Indian Antiquary*, and later in book form. Later still, she teamed up with a well-known "scientific folklorist" of the day, Major Richard Temple, who contributed the then customary scholarly apparatus of annotations, analyses and an appendix forbiddingly labelled "A Survey of the Incidents in Modern Aryan Indian Folk-tales". He also added to the

collection a few tales of his own garnering, among them the Raja Rasolu corpus, taken from the manuscript of a Rawalpindi accountant. But the real authorship of the stories, as both partners acknowledged, belongs to F.A. Steel.

She did, according to her own terms of reference, a good job. Aside from making the stories coherent, she turned them into reasonably workmanlike English, refreshingly free from Burtonesque Orientalisms and only rendered odd, to a modern eye, by a few "quot he's" and "quot she's" that leap out from the printed page. Eight stories make up the Raja Rasolu series, about the folk hero who may have been a contemporary of Charlemagne's; despite this promising material, the stories themselves are far the duller in the book. Then there are fifteen more or less comic animal tales, a prominent part being assigned to the Jackal - clearly the Indian spider-creature, analogous to the Ashanti Spider or the West European Reynard the Fox. A few hilarious anecdotes, too, about money-lenders and Yogis and fools with clever wives; these carry the flavour of local village life, but with an after-taste oddly familiar to the English reader, as if they had been lifted from some Indian *Canterbury Tales*. But when we come to what might be termed the high romance tales in the collection - the princess born (as in an Andersen story) of an subergine or an emerald-green pepper, the prince driven unjustly out to seek his fortune, the cruel stepmother, the exotically golden-haired beauty magicked into sleep in an enchanted palace till the hero wakes her - then we are indeed at home: for these stories are recognizably part (give or take a djinn or two) of what we, in our provincial way, have been accustomed to regard as the Western tradition. This may be due to the way in which F.A. Steel saw her material; but I doubt it. She may have "selected" with the object of securing a good story in what appears to be its best form; but one is inclined to believe her when she adds that she has not "doctored [the stories] in any way".

Why, then, is one more doubtful about Joseph Jacobs? He was, after all, collecting tales from the English-speaking world at much

the same period at which F.A. Steel travelled up and down the Punjab. He is equally frank about his concern to "secure a good story in its best possible form"; he provides at least as many notes and indications of sources. Indeed, The Bodley Head have thought it appropriate to publish his *English Fairy Tales* and *More English Fairy Tales* in a companion volume to Steel's *Tales from the Punjab*. Yet somehow Jacobs does not stand up very well to the implied comparison.

One trouble may be his sources. Not that he is coy about them, except, inescapably, in manner: they are chapbooks and ballads, correspondents in Canada and Australia, Mrs. Balfour (who is described as having a "thorough knowledge of the peasants' mind and mode of speech"), "my friend Andrew Lang" (who has kindly waived a copyright or so), other folklorists, and the specialized journals of the period. Jacobs collected few of the tales himself; and while this in itself would not matter, nor would his cavalier but on the whole defensible annexation of Lowland Scots material - he has done a deal of "doctored" or even these secondary sources. He removes incidents that bore him, adds others, "cobles together" stories from a number of literary originals and, worst of all, cheerfully "prose" ballads like "Bin-norie" and "Tam Lin" into lapsed pseudo-poetic paraphrases of his own devising. True, he is disarmingly frank about all this in his notes, even rather pluming himself on his ingenuity; but then, it soon emerges, he is out to prove something.

There has, a while ago, been Perrault; more recently, there have been the Grimms. Both have been widely read in England; indeed, people are beginning to say the English have no folk-tales of their own. Well, they have, too; and Jacobs is the man to prove it - with Lowland Scots material if necessary, or Australian, or Canadian, or indeed anything that has been transmitted anywhere in any recognizable form of the English tongue. Nor is it - and this is the real hat-trick - just a matter of The Three Bears (here, by the way, not yet associated with either Silverhair or the more modern Goldilocks) or of such familiar English heroes as Dick Whittington or Jack the Giant-killer. No, there is also the Pied Piper - not, indeed, of Hamelin, but of Franchville on the Selent; Perrault's "Peau d'Ane" is challenged, not merely by Cap O'Rushes, but by Rushen Coette as well; and - in the matter of supernatural helpers for girls who cannot spin fast enough - we are introduced not only to the

Scots spinning fairy Hahetrot but to a *Siddhi* Rimpelstiltiskiu whose secret name is *Tin Tin*. This is all great fun in its way - but care the penialist not to have "cobled them together out of each other? And, more to the point, what is a child to think who finds, twice in the same book, what is recognizably the same story with utterly a few names and sexes changed? He or she would surely feel cheated, and get rightly so. Telling the "best" version of a story is, in the right context, perfectly defensible, and so is comparing variants; but the two are not convincingly he done within the same covers.

In the end, the same rules apply to folk tales as to any other form of oral tradition; writing brings about an irreversible change. A tale written down is transfixed by the collector's pen; he has killed the thing he loves, but at the same time immortalized it, a specimen for ever. You can, naturally, do things to a specimen that you couldn't have done to the living, naturally wriggling live creature. You can study it, analyse it into its component parts, compare it (as a whole or in part) with others of the same general type; or you can have your fun by transposing and improving and "cobbling" instead. This is arguably the same kind of thing that oral narrators had, but at a more sophisticated, cold-blooded level; and it will not produce the same result.

Nor does it help to dress up your written version with shreds and patches of dialect speech. They won't bring the specimen to life again, but merely rob it of such dignity as its written word may be held to confer. Jacobs justifies all his efforts in this direction by reference to his old nurse, who seems to have heard - like the stories in his collection - from all parts of the English-speaking world at once. In this as in other matters (and as he would doubt himself put it) he doth pretest decidedly too much.

All these, clearly, are adult evils. But then, both collections are presented as being of interest to adults as well as children. And so they are; but in Jacobs's case, the interest is spoiled with irritation. True, in the end, and after all the folklorists ancient and modern have done their worst, you can always attempt to turn up the oral tradition again by reading a story aloud to the children. But be warned: the tale will no longer be the same tale as was once told by an old woman sitting beside her fire, or by a boy in an Indian village during the breathless hours between dusk and midnight.

## You can count on it

Tanya Harrod

WILLIAM STOBBS  
One, Two, Buckle my Shoe  
Bodley Head. £4.95.  
037030876  
ARNOLD LOBEL  
The Rose in My Garden  
Illustrated by Anita Lobel  
Julia MacRae. £5.95.  
086203180X  
RON MARIS  
The Punch and Judy Book  
Gollancz. £4.95.  
0575034149

William Stobbs, in pursuit of a fresh interpretation of the old counting rhyme, "One, Two, Buckle my Shoe", takes us to four with a horse being shod and a maddened goat butting a door. The rest of the rhyme's simple actions are carried out by squirrels, rabbits, turkey, geese and mice. Aside from getting it all rather wrong - shoeing a horse is hardly the same as bucking a shoe - Stobbs belongs to the fudge school of draughtsmanship and the book's odd simulated canvas appearance does not disguise this. Young children are queer creatures though and some might warm to the occasional odd detail in these drawings.

Arnold Lobel provides the words for Anita Lobel's cottage garden border in a floral version of the cumulative rhyme "This is the house that Jack built". Lines like

These are the hollyhocks orange and red,  
That stand by the hollyhocks high above ground

That give shade to the hoe  
That sleeps on the rise in my garden

are not quite as thrilling as the traditional mellowed milk forlorn and cow with a crumpled horn but there is a reasonably dramatic finale in which a cat is slung on the nose by that sleeping bee. Not a bad way of introducing a child to tulips, pansies and zinnias (as all the flowers are beautifully and accurately drawn) but the combination of a peaceful abundance of flora and an exiguous storyline will be more likely to please adults than children.

Ron Marla's are easily the best illustrations of the three. His *Punch and Judy* Book cleverly evokes an authentic seaside *Punch and Judy* show complete with seagull spectators. But all quite appropriate to freeze-frame Mr. Punch's notorious ways with babies, wives and doctors. Four pages of *Punch* dealing with a crying baby. "That's the way to do it" - suggest that Marla misses part of the point of *Punch and Judy* which has much to do with speed, stylized and therefore harmless - violence and audience participation. None the less this is a beautifully designed book in which Marla emerges as a poet and watercolour illustrator in the tradition of Harold Jones and Peter Spier. Odd little mis-nerd touches worthy of Salford about the seagulls swoop and soar if you flick the pages quickly, two portrait heads ostensibly painted on the booth watch *Punch*'s antics with increasing horror while the puppets themselves have confusingly mobile faces. A short episode provides a little historical background and the encouraging reminder that "All comes right in the end. The puppets come alive again for the next performance".

## The biggest bang of all

Marjorie Sweeting

TOM SIMKIN and RICHARD S. FISKE  
Krakatau 1883: The volcanic eruption and its effects  
464pp. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press. \$25 (paperback, \$15).  
0874748410

Of all the earth's landforms, volcanoes remain the most exciting and fascinating. It is not surprising that one of the most catastrophic and well-documented volcanic eruptions of modern times still captures our imagination and interest. *Krakatau 1883* is a superb book, scholarly but compelling reading. The Smithsonian Institution has long been involved in volcanology; this book springs partly from the compilation of a data bank on all known volcanic eruptions over the past 10,000 years and from the reports of SEAN, the Scientific Event Alert Network.

The eruption of Krakatau on August 26/27, 1883, produced probably the loudest noise ever heard on the surface of the earth - it was heard as far away as Rodriguez in Mauritius (nearly 3,000 miles) and at Alice Springs in Central Australia. It did not produce the largest recorded eruption of material (though it was larger than that of Mount St. Helens in 1980), but gave rise to some of the largest disturbances of the surface of the sea (sea waves or tsunamis) that have ever been known. Furthermore, the fine dust spewed out by Krakatau during the days of its intense activity circled the earth as a result of the atmospheric conditions of the time, and produced the green and blue sunsets so vividly described in Victorian newspapers.

After an introduction, *Krakatau 1883* is divided into three main sections which have in-

volved much research and translation from original accounts. The eruption came at a time when the world's communications were developing rapidly. Telegrams bearing the news soon appeared in newspapers and reported on the thousands of deaths caused. In particular, by the tsunamis. Thus, the first section of the book gives a selection of accounts by eighty-seven eye-witnesses to the eruption and the devastation which followed; many of these have been translated and are published for the first time. Those by sailors passing through the straits between Java and Sumatra at the time are particularly graphic, and one recalls how "for two days after passing Anjer [a nearby town, totally destroyed by a sea-wave] we passed through masses of dead bodies, hundreds and hundreds striking the ship on both sides".

The second substantial contribution consists of a translation from the Dutch of part of R. D. M. Verbeek's geological monograph of 1885. Verbeek had mapped the geology of Krakatau three years before and was the natural choice by the Dutch East Indies Government to make an investigation into the eruption. He and his team were there in October and November 1883 and also in 1884; they produced a work of 546 pages, of which about 100 are given in this volume and they appear relatively modern in outlook. During the eruption two-thirds of the main volcano disappeared; and Verbeek deduced correctly that this disappearance was due to the collapse of part of the island into its caldera. Accompanying this section are some beautifully reproduced chrome-lithographs, which give a remarkable picture of the ravaged areas between October 11 and 28, 1883.

Scientific accounts and interpretations occupy the last section of the book. These range from the Royal Society's report in 1888 to modern work in volcanology and recent

views on the sea-waves and the optical and atmospheric effects. J. W. Judd's account in the *Royal Society report* suffers in comparison with the Verbeek translation, since Judd was responsible for perpetrating the erroneous view that Krakatau disappeared by "blowing its top" as a result of great explosions in 1883, rather than by engulfment. Howel Williams's work on calderas is quoted and Krakatau shown to be "a type of caldera produced by collapse following the evaporation of a magma chamber by explosions of pumice". Some of the most interesting of the scientific accounts are those which discuss the origin of the sea-waves and the great distances over which the explosions were heard. European barographs, for instance, recorded profound variations during the period of the main explosions between August 27 and 31, 1883. The exact origin of the sea-waves is still not certain; but, because the waves caused by the atmospheric explosions and the sea-waves arrived together, a transfer of energy from the atmosphere to the ocean took place and sea-waves were produced with amplitudes (up to 135 ft) greatly exceeding hydrostatic values. Modern views on the causes of the brilliant sunsets are also given and these are accompanied by some of the marvellous sketches by William Ascroft on the unusual phenomena observed in Chelsea from November 1883.

*Krakatau 1883* is mainly geological in emphasis; there is only a short chapter on the presumed total destruction of animals and vegetation, and the sequence of the development of animals and plants since the eruption; the importance of floating pumice for biological dispersal is mentioned only in passing. But *Krakatau 1883* is full of ideas and thoughts on volcanoes; it is excellently produced and, because it has been supported by the Seidl Fund, it is superb value.

## Way, way back

Lynn Margulis

J. WILLIAM SCHOPF (Editor)  
Earth's Earliest Biosphere: Its origin and evolution  
568pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press. £87.80 (paperback, £30.20).  
0691083231

This book brings together scientific data in support of the theory that life began over 3500 million years ago. The contributors are members of the PPRG (Precambrian Paleobiology Research Group), scientists from several countries who worked together in both the field (South Africa and Australia) and the laboratory for over a year. They represent a wide range of disciplines: atmospheric science, geochemistry, geochronology, historical geology and paleontology, microbiology (including microbial physiology), organic chemistry and even astronomy. The result is a large-format book, clearly written and well produced. J. William Schopf, a professor of geology at the

University of California at Los Angeles, has woven the contributions together into an interdisciplinary work of the first order.

About certain issues there is consensus: life began via interactions of carbon and nitrogen-containing chemical substances with water on the Earth. Since that time there is direct evidence for the existence of micro-organisms, photosynthetic bacteria, capable of the conversion of solar energy into organic compounds for their own support and the sustenance of other (hetero-trophic) bacteria. From the very beginning of the rock record of the planet Earth there is a simultaneous record of an early biosphere. Archean conditions were quite different at the surface of the Earth from what they are now: the length of the day-night cycle was probably close to fifteen hours, 3,500 million years ago and only gradually reached the present value of twenty-four hours. The overall climate and average surface temperatures were probably not very far from those of today; only two episodes of glaciation are known from the Proterozoic Aeon (one very early and one late). No glaciations are known from the

Archean Aeon, neither is there evidence that the temperature was ever anywhere higher than 60 degrees centigrade. The composition of the air, however, was vastly different. There may have been a hundred times the amount of carbon dioxide as there is today and probably a million times less free oxygen. Oxygen, a waste product of bacterial photosynthetic metabolism, is thought to have built up from some tiny value, maybe only as little as one part in ten million in the early Archean, to a fair concentration in the atmosphere by 1,700 million years ago. Atmospheric oxygen was produced by cyanobacteria, a kind of bacteria which used to be called "blue green algae".

The book shows clearly that some kinds of bacterial life have been with the planet since its inception - that is, since its first molten rocks solidified. A small sample of the early life, in the form of tiny fossils, left traces of themselves. Remains of ancient bacteria can be observed under a microscope in the form of microfossils: stellate structures, spheres and filaments, embedded in the rocks. Other of these ancient bacteria joined together to make structured communities called microbial mats. Some microbial mats are preserved in the rock record as layered rocks called stromatolites, geological structures somewhat like coral reefs. Excellent black-and-white photographs of both microfossils and stromatolites are collected in a sixteen-page section in the middle of the book.

Geologists studying the stromatolites, organic chemists studying the chemical remains of once-living beings and biologists studying the microbial mats have pooled their information to make a readable sourcebook out of an immense quantity of data. Nearly all of it has been generated in the past twenty years; and it forms a new field of science that Preston Cloud calls "biogeology". (Professor Cloud, who serves as this book's historian, describes the fascinating origins of the science, at least in the United States and Europe, as an outgrowth of the Wendell Woodring conference held in Virginia in 1961. As Cloud recognizes, however, a science of the biosphere has had a longer history in the Soviet Union.) This book, though, is written for the scientist or the advanced science student, rather than the general reader.

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Eric Hosking's *Seabirds* (159pp. Croom Helm. £13.95: 0 7099 1264 1), with a text by Ronald Lockley which is lively and authoritative, is a magnificent collection by Britain's premier bird photographer.

## On the dragon-farm

Colin Greenland

JANE YOLEN  
Heart's Blood  
252pp. Julia MacRae. £6.95.  
0862031532

Heart's Blood is a large red dragon on the planet Austar IV, where dragons are farmed for their hides and their meat, but reared primarily as fighting beasts. Heart's Blood belongs to Jakkin Stewart, a former bond-slave who has bought his freedom with the winnings from her victories. Like all dragon-trainers, he lives and works in telepathic communication with his animal, "their thoughts linked in great coloured patterns". At times of special emotional intensity, as when Heart's Blood lays her first clutch of eggs, the communion becomes union: "She was - his other self, he supposed." Jakkin is therefore somewhat ambivalent about risking her life in the arena, though it has won him everything he has. He is even more disturbed when he finally goes inside a slaughterhouse and sees what happens to another dragon from Master Sakkharn's farm, maimed in a fight. There are the makings here of a novel of outrage against the human exploitation of our big dumb friends (Heart's Blood has been bred minute), directed at youngsters in the compassionate, vulnerable, pony phase. Jane Yolen, however, makes the crucial point that the dragons were almost extinct before human colonists domesticated them; and that the dragons are integral to the economy of Austar IV as casinos to Las Vegas. Paltos may be appropriate, but the plight of the dragon is determined, and Jakkin's whole existence is dependent on it. To change it would mean changing his own identity and the structure of human society on and around Austar IV, perhaps destructively. It is in this very radical direction that Yolen moves in this second

volume of the *Pit Dragon Trilogy*.

Whatever its violent mythic origins as the Worm Ouroboros, the Kundalini Serpent, the Serpent in the Garden, the dragon is currently the most sentimentalized creature in the fantastical bestiary, not even excepting the unicorn. Dragons may never be cuddly, but they're awfully noble. The dragon nurseries of Austar IV are a direct logical result of the domestication of dragons in the juvenile culture of Britain and, even more commercially, America. For once Tolkien is not himself guilty, but it is the Tolkien-derived industry that has produced the fantasy role-playing game "Dungeons and Dragons". Peter Dickinson's *Flight of Dragons* and Anne McCaffrey's interminable *Dragonriders* series. It's quite significant that Jane Yolen's dragons cannot be ridden (emphasized in a perilous rescue sequence in *Heart's Blood*), for otherwise, whatever the circumstances of their respective compositions, Yolen's story of young dragon-trainers in telepathic intercourse with their charges inevitably resides squarely in the vast purple shadow of McCaffrey's.

Yolen's concern is not with the winsome, pre-croitic symbolism of the symbiosis, only with its difficulties and its artificiality. Yolen is tough. She concentrates sternly on the most visceral and uterine functions of minding a hen dragon. Her book is knee-deep in dragon-droppings (which, following T. H. White, she calls "fewmets"). She then embroils Jakkin, as young yokel, in complex city and interplanetary politics he can barely grasp, let alone make decisions about. An imperious, mysterious stranger comes to Master Sakkharn's farm with news of his runaway daughter Akki, Jakkin's lost love. She is with a rebel organization; but has she infiltrated, been kidnapped by or gone over to them? What does he want with Jakkin, and can Jakkin trust him? There is a grimness to the ensuing plot that even the psychedelic "sentinels" of life's great dragons do not alleviate.